

2005 Update
of
The Harpswell Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by:
The Harpswell Comprehensive Plan Committee

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Harpswell residents are extremely generous in volunteering their services to the Town in many capacities. This 2005 Comprehensive Plan was developed through the tireless efforts of a number of residents. The seven-person committee and the Town Planner had the advisory support of the 2003 comprehensive plan committee, which had begun drafting plans that were put on hold during the year of decision involving the possibility of a major industrial complex in Harpswell. After the LNG issue was decided, a new comprehensive plan committee appointed by the Selectmen, began work, beginning with a review of the 1993 Plan and the 2003 drafts. Thanks to members of the 2003 Advisory Committee for providing a solid base for our new research and results: Yvette Alexander, David W. Chipman, William Greenwood, Frank Kibbe, Richard Neiman, Karen O'Connell, Arthur Powers, Peter Riesenber, Trudi Riesenber, and Burr Taylor.

Thanks to Rick Seeley and the team from the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) who provided planning assistance, statistical research, and superb maps that reveal a visible picture of our unique Harpswell.

Very special thanks go to Jay Chace, Town Planner. He picked up the responsibility when Noel Musson, previous planner, took a new position out of the Harpswell area. Jay's knowledge and experience in planning has provided reliable assistance at all committee meetings and workshops. His work in managing the endless drafts of documents, serving as liaison for the Committee and GPCOG, managing the website, and solving innumerable problems has been outstanding. Harpswell is fortunate to have Jay Chace as our Town Planner.

We also thank the Selectmen and Town Administrator for their support during the three years of work in building this Plan. Thanks also to Town residents who attending our meetings, asked questions, and expressed their concerns. With all of the support received, we have tried our best to provide a Plan that will protect the public interest on behalf of Harpswell residents.

Elsa Martz, Co-chair, has given countless hours to organize and make this Plan as readable and user-friendly as possible. Members of the committee are especially grateful to Howard Nannen, an experienced town planner, for his leadership and commitment in helping to develop this ten-year Comprehensive Plan for Harpswell.

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APPENDIX

A. Vision Statement (2002)

**On file at Town Office*

Cundy's Harbor Working Waterfront Study (2004)

Harpswell Housing Report (2003)

Land-Use Planning: some Hydrologic Consideration (2002)

2002 Update of the Harpswell Comprehensive Plan, Marine Resources (2002)

Wright-Pierce Drinking Water and Sanitary Septic Study – Phase 1 (2001)

Town of Harpswell Fishing Industry Profile (1999)

Gerber-Rand Groundwater Resource analysis, Harpswell Maine (1982)

Large Format Comprehensive Planning Maps

- Future Land Use
- Existing Land Use
- Development Constraints
- Remaining Subdividable Parcels
- New Residential Permits, 1998-2003
- Water Resources
- Drainage Basins Analysis
- Natural and Marine Resources

INTRODUCTION

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update has been prepared by fellow citizens of Harpswell, your neighbors. They hope that their work will help prepare Harpswell for the inevitable changes of the next decade. The plan is based upon their research, their many consultations with you, and the advice of experts.

Role of the Comprehensive Plan

This Comprehensive Plan serves many functions. It is an expression of the community's vision of its future. It is a guide to making the many public and private decisions that will determine the Town's future. It is a source of basic information about the Town's natural resources and its human environments. The Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning ordinance, nor is it a law. It is an advisory document setting out the community's goals for the future and the policies and programs necessary to move the Town in the direction of its goals. It is a foundation on which to build the Town's land use controls and a road map that can be used by the Town's elected and appointed officials to steer the Town on an agreed-upon course.

In addition to these compelling reasons for updating our Comprehensive Plan, the State of Maine mandates, through its Growth Management Program (Title 30-A §4312), that all communities update their comprehensive plan every ten years. Through the establishment of this law, the State effectively overrides a town's "home rule" authority and establishes the way in which communities engage in land use planning and regulation.

This Comprehensive Plan Update is an effort to balance anticipated growth with the community's natural and cultural values. It is an expression of the residents' values, as communicated to the Harpswell Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC).

Planning Process and Public Involvement

The essential key to any community-wide planning effort is involvement of the community. During a visioning session in the spring of 2002, the community developed the guiding principles for this Update¹. The CPC has continued to seek out and encourage involvement of Harpswell residents through a number of different avenues. As a result, the CPC has conducted nearly 100 public meetings and workshops. Additionally, the CPC and Town Planner have sponsored six public seminars and a field trip with invited experts in affordable housing, water quality, water pollution and wildlife planning. The public was also invited to several town-wide forums and a public hearing on the final draft plan; all of which aided in the development of this Comprehensive Plan Update.

¹ "A Vision for Harpswell" available in the Appendix

In addition to the numerous opportunities for direct public access to the planning process, the CPC utilized innovative methods for disseminating the ideas and concepts found in this Update. The town's web site proved to be a valuable source of communicating with the public and an avenue for residents to share their reactions to the Plan. Also, a number of the public forums were televised and taped by the local Harpswell Community Television station. Numerous articles about the Plan's progress have been published in the local newspaper and in several Harpswell Bulletins mailed to all residents. A thirty-question survey, mailed with one of the Harpswell Bulletins, was completed and returned to the Committee by over 700 residents.

In all our efforts we have tried to recognize the range of interest that Harpswell's diverse populations cherish, and to balance and respect the importance of different views. We recognize that all groups desire a bright future for the town and that although there may be deeply held different views on what is right for Harpswell, which future is best, there are many overlapping areas of agreement.

Each member of the committee came to it with a desire to preserve, as much as possible, the best in the community: its traditional character based upon agriculture and fishing, its respect for property rights, its generally flexible yet protective policies toward the environment, and its proven ability to work things out.

In their work, committee members have had to acknowledge the inevitability of change and certain resistances to it. In our proposals we hope to have identified and managed change with respect for both the private and public good and needs. As far as possible we have tried to make self-interest coincide with the public good. And since change will always happen, we have tried to envision a community in which economic, ecological, and social processes and activities work toward the maintenance and regeneration of shared values and culture.

Past Planning Activities

This Comprehensive Plan is the fifth generation of plans for the community. The first Plan was prepared in 1974 by the Planning Board in response to the State Shoreline Zoning Law. It was updated in 1981, 1987, and again in 1993. The 1981 update was prepared by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the 1987 and 1993 updates were prepared by a new configuration of the same committee with the assistance of a consultant. Our 2005 Update was prepared by the Comprehensive Plan Committee with assistance from both the Town Planning Office and the Greater Portland Council of Governments.

Since the last Comprehensive Plan Update in 1993, a number of the major recommendations of that Plan have been implemented: retirement of waste incinerator; focus on recycling; introduction of several new land use ordinances; increased professional staff in codes enforcement; major study of water quality and quantity; and major study of the fishing industry in Town are several examples. This committee has

carefully reviewed the 1993 Plan ensuring that relevant recommendations have been brought forth to the present Plan.

Elements of this Plan

This plan has been organized by the Comprehensive Plan Committee in an effort to make it both a user friendly and informative document. To achieve this goal, the Plan is arranged in two distinct parts.

Part I is the active piece of the Plan, highlighting background information, trends and analysis that introduce and give context to the goals, policies and action recommendations.

Part I begins with the Projected Growth which provides a brief overview of the fundamental issues facing Harpswell in the next 10 years. This is followed by seven major planning elements: Marine Environment, Groundwater Resources, Natural Habitat, Housing, Community Character, Marine Economy, and Public Services. Each of these sections contains its own background, trends, analysis/issues, goals, policies, and action recommendations. The ideas in the planning elements chapters serve as the underpinnings for the Future Land Use Plan. The Implementation Plan provides a timeline for the actions the Town will take to achieve the goals set forth by this Plan. Part I concludes the Capital Investments Plan that lists projected capital investment needs of the Town over the next 10 years that were identified in the comprehensive planning process.

Part II expands the background information in Part I, further delineating the information that guided the policy-making process. The Part II background materials correlate with the topics in Part I as indicated in the Table of Contents. The information in this section is designed to augment the background, trends and analysis/issues sections of Part I, and to meet certain State requirements. These materials should prove valuable to those who are charged with implementing the action recommendations of the Plan.

PLAN SUMMARY

2005 Harpswell Comprehensive Plan Update

Any summary of a comprehensive plan over 100 pages long, containing over 150 recommendations relating to the future of Harpswell can only present an overview of the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan Committee suggests that the public use the Summary to discover how a topic of interest is covered in broad terms. Then citizens may seek further detail by reading the related chapter in Part I and statistical background for that chapter in Part II.

In broad terms the Plan outlines the form and features of the face of Harpswell. It discusses how the face of Harpswell is changing, the challenges and opportunities the change presents to the Town, and how to manage change for the benefit of residents and the environment.

Projected Growth

In the coming ten years state planners expect Harpswell will grow by about 500 more people and up to 400 new homes. Based on past trends, these new homes and seasonal homes can reasonably be anticipated to consume 1000 acres of undeveloped land - nearly 7% of the total land area of the town. Our new residents will continue a trend of an aging population and fewer children. Results of these trends include more commuting workers, declining access to the water for fishing, development pressures on working waterfronts, increasing land costs, less affordable housing, and new demands on municipal services.

Marine Environment

Harpswell's identity stems from its connection to the sea. Marine resources vital to the health and future of the town include clean ocean water, unpolluted coastal marshes, shellfish beds, and wildlife habitat. The health of these resources is determined by the amount, location and quality control of new development. Factors such as faulty septic systems, pesticides and fertilizers, and overboard discharges of untreated sewage degrade marine resources. To achieve the goal of a high quality marine ecosystem, the Plan outlines ordinances and actions that control pollution, promotes regional cooperation and encourages ongoing educational efforts.

Groundwater Resources

Perhaps the single natural resource on which residents most depend is clean groundwater, used for human consumption. The town has no public water supply or distribution system, so bedrock wells provide most groundwater supply. A recent study of the town's groundwater details extensive information and data about the condition of this resource, noting 29 areas with existing and potential degradation, largely due to overly dense, older residential development. To protect the safety and adequacy of the town's groundwater,

policies and actions suggest education, conservation, further research, and land use standards for future development.

Natural Habitat

Harpswell's landform, consisting of islands and peninsula circumscribed by 216 miles of oceanfront, creates a rich and diverse marine-forest environment. Since most of the inland, forested landscape is no more than half a mile from the ocean, alteration of this landscape also alters habitat. Freshwater and coastal wetlands, of principal concern, support wildlife species on which we depend for harvesting, and which depend on us for preservation. Development jeopardizes habitat with intrusion and pollution. Preservation of habitat to maintain current diversity and health of wildlife will result from Plan proposals to accommodate new development, while balancing the value of habitat. To assist in systematic planning for habitat conservation, the Plan recommends that Harpswell develop a town-wide open space plan.

Housing

In the past ten years about 500 new homes have been built, but the town's population increased by only 227 residents from 1990-2000. Because of Harpswell's extensive and desirable shoreline for residential development, the prices of land and new homes have risen rapidly. Although this phenomenon adds to the town's tax base and restrains the mill rate, higher assessed values adversely affect some long-time residents, seniors on fixed incomes, and young families. The eventual result of a lack of affordable housing is a loss of Harpswell's population diversity. In order to provide a full range of housing opportunities for town residents, the Plan encourages determining the extent of need and developing strategies to meet those needs. These strategies include education about the issue, researching funding sources, and joint public/private efforts to develop affordable housing. To promote a broader range of housing types, zoning regulations should be made more flexible.

Community Character

This broad topic covers social and physical characteristics of Harpswell, which best define the town. These include the town's fishing/farming heritage, its village settlement pattern, more recent settlement patterns, economic foundation, and visual appeal of its remaining rural areas. Impacts on these elements of community character result from location, amount, type and cost of new development. As new large homes replace historic working waterfront homes, the character of fishing communities is lost. As new homes are built in wooded rural areas, habitat is lost and rural quality diminished. As traditional shared access to the ocean is lost to new housing development, fishing and shell fishing opportunities are lost. Recommendations include modifications to land use ordinances to encourage most new development to be built around historic villages as centers of community life. By contrast, limited development should be accommodated in rural areas. Preservation of working waterfronts, historic neighborhoods, and valuable natural resources is a priority.

Marine Economy

Fishing has been the mainstay of the local economy for generations. Many fishing families still reside in town after five or six generations. Research indicates that 50-60% of local jobs are fishing-related. The value of the landed catch in Harpswell varies with conditions and regulations, but is estimated at \$10 million annually. Some fishermen state they represent the last generation to continue fishing because of regulation, risk, development pressures and other options open to younger individuals. Pressures on the industry include loss of access to the ocean, increasing recreational use of waters, federal regulation, and closure of shellfish grounds due to pollution from development. To retain a sustainable marine economy, the town must limit conversion of working waterfronts to new residential uses, preserve access, manage lands abutting shellfish flats to reduce pollution, and diversify the marine economy by promoting nature-base tourism on town waters.

Public Services

Public services are provided in Harpswell by a responsive town government and a multitude of volunteers that embody the best of community life. As the town grows, levels and cost of services increase. Substantive improvements in the past ten years include a new recycling center, expanded code enforcement, town administrator, town planner, expanded town offices, acquisition of Mitchell Field and land around the town offices, a recreation director and new ball field. Policies to improve public services in administration, improve town landings, codes enforcement, waste disposal, recreation, fire, rescue, police, transportation system, libraries, and schools are included. Plans for Mitchell Field are outlined, and the fiscal capacity of the town to provide adequate facilities to meet future needs is discussed.

Future Land Use Plan

Comprehensive plans are required by the state to include a description of where and how to accommodate future growth. This chapter identifies areas in town suitable for new development in the next ten years, and those areas better maintained for their natural functions as wetlands, coastal marshes, and wildlife habitat. Strategies to manage growth include public incentives and modifications to land use ordinances that encourage growth where desired. These strategies include recommendations for intensity and type of land uses. The goals of the proceeding chapters are accomplished with the principles and mechanisms of the Future Land Use Plan. It, along with the balance of the Comprehensive Plan, becomes the foundation for future growth management and land use ordinances.

Planning Maps The Comprehensive Plan Committee developed with its consultant and the Town Planner a number of inventory and planning maps, which underpin the Future Land Use Plan. These identify and locate natural resources, habitat, existing land use, water resources, recent new house permits, developable land, and development constraints. This Comprehensive Plan includes an Existing Land Use Map, Development

Constraints Map, and Future Land Use Map. Others are available for study at the town offices and are valuable for use by selectmen, planning board, real estate agents, builders, and residents.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is a systematic approach guiding the Town's efforts to employ the action recommendations as prescribed throughout the Comprehensive Plan. An oversight committee will be established by the Selectmen with the primary responsibility for reviewing the progress of the Plan's implementation. The materials in Part II of the Plan provide valuable background information to those who are charged with implementing the action recommendations of the Plan.

Capital Investment Plan

The Capital Investment Plan (CIP) identifies the Town's anticipated expenditures on public infrastructure and services in order to accommodate the project growth. This CIP explicitly recognizes the implicit costs associated with the Town's future needs as identified throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

PART I

PROJECTED GROWTH

Here is a brief overview of the range of trends and issues facing Harpswell in the next 10 years. These trends and issues are described in more detail in the Issue Summaries of Part I and the Background Chapters of Part II.

Population and Housing By 2015, Harpswell's 2000 population of 5,239 is projected to have increased by approximately 500 people. Taking into account the continued shrinking of the region's average household size and the growing retirement population, this growth is projected to add about 340 new year-round housing units and about 48 new seasonal housing units to the existing supply. This represents an increase of about 14% in year-round housing units, and an increase of about 4% in seasonal housing units since 2000.

Land Area Required How much land this new residential growth will occupy depends in part on what the minimum lot size requires, but also on what people prefer and how much land they can afford. If the minimum lot size remained the same as it is now and all new residential development took place on lots just meeting the minimum lot size, about 80%, or about 310 houses, would likely be developed on one-acre lots and about 20%, or 78 houses, would be built on two-acre lots or an alternate lot size, as currently allowed, within subdivisions. Together, both these types of new residential development may easily consume more than 500 to 800 additional acres of undeveloped land.

But because normal market forces include the sale of at least some building lots at a range of sizes in excess of the minimum lot size, the projected growth may realistically take place on about 1,000 acres of presently undeveloped land.

In addition to the amount of open land to be converted to residential land under either assumption above, some unknown portion of the new development, perhaps as much as 10%, will require new roads to serve it, that will consume additional land. Of the remaining undeveloped and unprotected land in Harpswell, it is reasonable to expect that the total acres to be developed will equal or exceed 1,100 acres.

Demographic Trends and Changes in Community Character Harpswell is in the midst of a trend begun perhaps as early as 20 years ago, of changing from primarily a fishing community to one where fishing and related marine industries still provide the largest source of local jobs and the largest number of small businesses, but the majority of people are retirees and upper middle class professionals who commute to work in other communities.

Access to the Water Traditional means of access to the water are declining and marine and fishing support industries, infrastructure and moorings are increasingly under pressure to serve recreational boating interests and/or sell to developers who will likely convert these essential, often water-dependent uses to more lucrative, non-marine or non-fishing related uses.

Agriculture and Forestry Agriculture has nearly disappeared as a full-time occupation as has forestry. The amount of land in Tree Growth has declined by 34% between 1993 and 2004.

The Prices of Land and Housing Meanwhile, the very high and still climbing median price of homes and land, as well as the shortage of rental housing in Harpswell, are pricing younger and less affluent households out of the housing market, even away from the waterfront. At this writing, Harpswell has the highest median home price of any town in Maine. Most of Harpswell's households could not afford to buy a new house at the 2002 median price of \$287,500 if they were to enter the housing market today, and younger households are in that market. The proportion of heads of households under 44 years of age has dropped from 43% in 1990 to 32% in 2000 and is projected to be 28% in 2007.

Schools Because of the high price of housing that results from the influx of retirees, pre-retirees and other older and/or more affluent working residents, enrollment in Harpswell's two elementary schools has been declining and threatens the long-term viability of continuing to provide education to elementary students in these two school locations.

Changing Service Needs for an Aging Population As the average age of a Harpswell resident continues to rise in the future due to the forces outlined above, the nature of some municipal and regional services may change in response. For instance, emergency medical services may need to become more responsive to the needs of an aging population in their equipment and training. Similarly, the menu of needed recreational programs and facilities may change to accommodate more older citizens while still serving all age groups. There will be increasing demand for in-home caregivers and for programs such as Meals on Wheels. Perhaps municipal trash and recyclables collection may become needed.

Open Space, Public Access, Water, Natural and Marine Resources As the Town grows, its historic and rural character, its groundwater resources, its marine resources, its marine economy, its forestry, its scenic and habitat values, and its public access to the sea, may all suffer significant losses in the next ten years if they are not recognized and protected through sound growth management and continuing private conservation efforts.

Added Demands on Municipal Lands and Volunteer Government Owning the several large parcels of land that it does, and having recently enlarged the Town Office in a major expansion, the Town is well positioned with land needed to meet a variety of community needs for the next ten years. The Town has always had a very active spirit of volunteerism and independence, and it has served the Town well in providing a range of community and municipal services and plans.

Even so, fire and rescue services, which continue to be supplied on an all-volunteer basis are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain available staffing levels that are needed, as

older volunteers retire and new ones are not replacing them as fast, and as more qualified volunteers work further from Harpswell.

These are among the many issues and trends facing the Town and its people, which are addressed in the pages that follow.

MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Background A close connection to the sea has always been at the base of the Harpswell economy and quality of life, and the sea will remain the heart and future of Harpswell. Fishing, shellfish production, boat building, boatyards and marinas, kayaking, restaurants, lodgings, even real estate and the resulting construction of new homes -- all of these businesses and others are rooted in our relationship with the sea and depend on a healthy marine environment. Much of the everyday quality of life in Harpswell also derives from our intimacy with the ocean. Among the important resources of Harpswell's marine environment are unpolluted water, a productive sea floor, coastal marshes, shellfish beds, coastal waterfowl and wading bird habitat, eelgrass beds, sea bird nesting islands, and essential habitat for federally listed endangered species.

Trends The growth of some of these activities threatens the well being of the marine environment. Development, whether on the waterfront or inland, increases the potential for erosion, sedimentation, and storm water runoff. In addition, waterfront development intrudes permanently into vegetation that previously buffered wildlife's use of the shoreline. Added sediment and boat traffic over eelgrass beds can limit their growth or cause them to die back. Pesticides and fertilizers on new lawns and gardens near the shore threaten the marine ecosystem and fishing. Septic systems near the shore and streams that drain into the ocean send the nutrient nitrogen to the sea. These and other sources contribute nutrients beyond natural levels, thus stimulating growth of marine algae and plankton, and lowering dissolved oxygen in marine waters. There are ongoing impacts from existing development that prevent the harvesting of shellfish in major portions of the Town. Failing septic systems contribute to coliform bacteria counts in adjacent coastal waters that trigger the prohibition of shellfish harvesting under federal regulations. Overboard discharge systems (OBDs) that were licensed by the State until the mid-1970s result in closed shellfish areas. Marine toilets pollute marine waters when emptied at sea or in harbor. Marine littering can injure a variety of sea creatures.

Analysis/Issues Some of these trends are already being addressed. Over the past several years, with financial help from the Maine DEP, overboard discharge systems are being replaced and have decreased from a peak of 127 to 93 remaining systems. Some clam-flats have been reopened to harvest. Marine toilet pump-out stations are being set up at local marinas. New waterfront construction uses erosion and sedimentation controls. Shoreland zoning vegetation buffer requirements are being more strictly enforced and penalties for violations have been increased. The town is participating in two regional efforts to protect and improve the marine environment.

Much more needs to be done if Harpswell is to maintain and protect the high quality marine environment upon which our marine and tourist industries and our quality of life depend. Shoreland setbacks and vegetation buffering need to be extended to streams which drain into the sea. Existing homeowners and waterfront users need to be informed about and encouraged to create vegetative buffers wherever reasonable. Nitrogen loading from septic systems needs to be addressed. Commercial and recreational boaters need to be encouraged to respect and protect the marine environment. New opportunities for

coordination with neighboring towns and regional organizations working to address shared marine resource management issues must be explored.

Opening shellfish areas that are closed requires not just OBD removal, but correction of other problems that impede good water quality and contribute to closures. New septic system technology offers more options for treating wastewater adequately.

The Town must manage its growth in ways that best preserve and protect the marine environment and its dependent livelihoods and lifestyles.

Goal: Maintain a high quality marine ecosystem.

❖ *Policies*

- Ensure that Town ordinances have adequate provisions for review of any proposed activity that could adversely impact the marine environment.
- Establish Town performance standards to minimize the impact of new construction on streams that feed into the ocean.
- Ensure that Town ordinances are adequate to minimize and control septic, sediment, nutrient, and other non-point pollution sources.
- Cooperate with other towns on Casco Bay to monitor the marine ecosystem and create multi-jurisdictional policies that protect the marine environment.
- Encourage marine-related businesses to operate in a clean and responsible way and support their efforts through publicity and other means.
- Increase general public knowledge of how to protect the marine environment from harmful human activities.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Further restrict the use of herbicides, fertilizers, and toxins near the shoreline to reduce their harmful effects on Harpswell's waters. As a general guideline, a 100-foot setback is recommended (the same distance the State requires for septic systems).
- Continue Town's grant program to eliminate overboard discharges.
- Maintain strong code enforcement efforts to protect the marine environment.
- Continue to participate in the New Meadows River Watershed Project and the Friends of Casco Bay. Explore possibilities for new regional efforts to monitor and improve the quality of the marine environment.
- Explore new septic system technologies which may reduce nitrogen nutrient loading of the marine environment.
- Support efforts to improve utilization of pump-out stations and trash disposal facilities.
- Commit resources to develop educational materials on the value to Harpswell of a high quality marine environment for use in schools and distribution to residents.

- Develop and distribute educational materials to encourage homeowners to adopt best management practices for minimizing pollution from run-off by maintaining good vegetative buffers along the shore and streams draining to the shore.

GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

Background Harpswell has 24.6 square miles of land area located on a long, narrow peninsula and three large islands, comprising 216 miles of shoreline. Harpswell's groundwater resources can be likened to small lenses of freshwater, floating underground on the surface of heavier marine groundwater that surrounds and underlies all of the Town's landmasses. Harpswell residents and businesses depend for their drinking water on these limited and fragile groundwater resources. With the exception of 93 properties served by overboard discharge systems, all of Harpswell's residents and businesses also rely on groundwater to accept their wastewater. There are no documented sand and gravel aquifers in Harpswell and no water bodies that either could or do serve as public reservoirs for the Town. There are a few mapped areas containing known high-yield bedrock wells, and some additional mapped locations of known moderate-yield bedrock wells. The precise boundaries of recharge areas for these wells are not known.

Trends Over the years, Harpswell's groundwater resources have been studied – once in a 1982 townwide study, again via well surveys in the 1990s, and again in a townwide study completed in 2001. Documented problems include septic system failures contaminating nearby wells, salt water intrusion due to overuse of local groundwater, various types of petroleum product spills, road salt showing up in well water, and high sodium and chloride levels in well water from water softeners in nearby septic system effluent. Not surprisingly these problems have been concentrated in smaller landmass areas with the highest density of development. Harpswell's 2001 Drinking Water and Sanitary Septic Study – Phase I by Wright-Pierce, mapped 6 multiple groundwater impact areas, including the north end of Bailey Island and south end of Orr's Island, Cundy's Harbor, Potts Point, Long Point and Merriman Cove.

Analysis/Issues These multiple impact areas and many other documented single or dual impact locations pose health hazards if not managed and monitored with care. They also create uncertainty about how much additional development can be supported, given the limited quantity of groundwater available. Additional development diminishes groundwater recharge. However, groundwater quality issues, especially nitrate-nitrogen concentrations and, in shoreline areas, saltwater intrusion, are likely to show up as problems due to excessive density of development long before new impervious surfaces limit recharge enough to cause groundwater quantity problems. The Wright-Pierce study documents known problems, and identifies 29 other potential problem areas in which current density exceeds what both the 1982 Gerber-Rand Groundwater Resource Analysis, Harpswell Maine, and the 2001 Wright-Pierce Study recommend for the soil types. While these 29 areas are only designated as 'possible problem density areas', it should be noted that the Wright-Pierce Study recommends that these areas should not be targeted for additional growth, and includes several recommended measures to establish sustainable density standards and to carefully evaluate proposed new subdivision developments.

In the event that development density were to lead to significant nitrate-nitrogen or salt intrusion problems, the Gerber-Rand Study and the Wright-Pierce Study agree that the

feasibility of developing a community water system in Harpswell is uncertain due to implementation and operational costs to meet the demands which Harpswell's unique geographic makeup present. While future technologies, such as desalination, may someday mitigate these costs, it seems reasonable to conclude that it will be more economical in the long run for Harpswell to develop responsible land use regulations that respect sustainable development densities for private wells and septic systems.

Goal: Protect the Town's groundwater in order to provide safe, adequate water supply.

❖ *Policies:*

- Minimize potential negative impacts of wastewater/sewage disposal systems.
- Protect overall ground and surface water quality and the shell-fishing industry by controlling discharges of potential pollutants into the waters of the Town.
- Establish performance standards for new development and redevelopment projects to protect groundwater supply in sensitive areas from contamination by salt, bacteria, nitrates, petroleum, and other potential hazards.
- To minimize groundwater pollution, develop incentives for residents and builders to install efficient wastewater disposal systems.
- Develop a strategy for promoting water conservation among homeowners and businesses.
- Educate the public and, in particular, incorporate into the school curriculum, programs regarding the Town's ground and surface water, their importance to the community, and the types of activities that can jeopardize them.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Continue to educate and advertise conservation practices that residents can employ for the preservation of groundwater (such as the rain barrel program).
- Identify the Town's high yield aquifers and recharge areas, including wetlands and subsurface recharge areas, and explore feasible solutions for their protection.
- Undertake a study of groundwater, aquifers, and soil conditions to serve as a future basis for identifying areas of the Town that can support higher densities of development.
- Continue to rigorously enforce the requirements of Maine's Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules, especially with respect to conversion of seasonal dwelling units.
- Watersheds of particular importance, or which drain into flats, should be identified. Contamination and potential for contamination should be investigated. If areas of concern are identified, the Town should develop strategies to protect the water quality in these streams.
- Seek ways to accelerate the elimination of overboard discharge systems.
- Review Town ordinances regarding the use of common water and/or sewer systems and develop better incentives to encourage their use in problem areas and developments that propose cluster or open space development.

- Identify areas of groundwater contamination and work with owners of the contaminated properties to facilitate clean-up efforts.
- Identify existing "shared" water supplies in the community. Encourage the owners of these supplies to have their water tested for contamination. If contaminated, the Town should work with the owners to facilitate elimination of contamination and develop options for preventing future contamination, including the development of mini-wellhead protection programs.

Groundwater as related to Land Use Planning so as not to exceed acceptable density recommendations for Harpswell requires a townwide view and a more focused view of managing new development to respect groundwater limitations.

For the Townwide view, the Future Land Use Plan and Map considered densities as recommended by both the Gerber-Rand Study and the Wright-Pierce Study. To protect the Town's groundwater and recharge systems the Gerber-Rand Study and the Wright-Pierce Study recommend the following densities, expressed as minimum lot sizes, according to which of five major soil types is predominantly present:

Glaciomarine Sand – Minimum Lot Size of 0.5 acres
 Reworked Glacial Till – Minimum Lot Size of 0.8 acres
 Glacial Till/Exposed Bedrock – Minimum Lot Size of 1.3 acres
 Lodgement Till – Minimum Lot Size of 2 acres
 Glaciomarine Clay/Silt – Minimum Lot Size of 4.2 acres

Planning from the townwide perspective also requires respecting the relative limits of existing groundwater use rates as percentage of available recharge. The question of how extensively each of the many small drainage basins within Harpswell are already drawing on their limited groundwater resource needed to be examined. Using methods employed in a recent Phippsburg townwide hydrogeological study, this Plan has divided the parts of Harpswell into drainage basins for analyzing how much of available groundwater recharge is being used and how much is available to serve additional development.

The Drainage Basin Analysis Map² shows the percentage of available recharge presently in use in each watershed and identifies watersheds at risk from further development. The use of available recharge in Harpswell drainage basins varies from under 10% to a maximum of 30% (Cundy's Harbor). This appears to show that, almost everywhere, development does not presently exceed available recharge. However both groundwater studies cited above identify some localized instances of wells going dry instances of salt intrusion. In at least some instances these may reflect small subareas within individual drainage basins where use exceeds recharge due to density of existing development. Soil types, available recharge and existing documented groundwater problems should all be used in determining appropriated maximum densities of new development.

² Available at the Town Office

Another level at which development density must be evaluated is the site-specific or project specific. The Town's Site Plan and Subdivision ordinances currently establish some groundwater protection standards that new residential subdivisions, and new commercial, industrial, institutional, and municipal development must meet. Nevertheless, individual subdivisions and site plans can only be evaluated for whether they meet these standards on a case-by-case basis using professionally accepted methods of site-specific hydrogeologic analysis. The Wright Pierce Study, the Gerber-Rand Study and a report on a workshop prepared for the Harpswell Conservation Commission concerning some hydrogeologic considerations, prepared and delivered in August 2002 by D. W. Newberg Associates, Inc. of Harpswell, all contain recommendations for establishing and administering more effective site plan and subdivision review standards for groundwater impacts³.

Two other groundwater protection issues that are less related to densities include protection against contamination of wells by road salt and protection against leaks from fuel oil storage tanks and piping. The Newberg Report and the Wright-Pierce Study contain specific recommendations for improving protection against these forms of contamination as well.

❖ ***Policies***

- To preserve high value groundwater resources for future use, the Town will protect identified aquifer recharge areas through land use policies

❖ ***Action Recommendations***

- Establish a Town plumbing code that takes into account Harpswell's unique geology and geography
- Review Town ordinances to ensure that the regulations are adequate to reduce the impact of existing and proposed development on the groundwater supply.

³ Reports available at the Town Office

NATURAL HABITAT

Background The Town of Harpswell has a uniquely diverse natural and marine environment, due in large part to its distinctive geography as a town with long narrow peninsulas and over 40 offshore islands. With 216 miles of shoreline encompassing 24.6 square miles of land, one is never very far from the sea in Harpswell. The topography is varied with many areas of steep slopes and spectacular scenic views from both the water and the land. Outside of densely developed areas, most of the land is forested. The forest sometimes reaches directly to the sea or tidal flats, and less often to coastal marshes. Within the forest are many freshwater wetlands (swamp, marsh or bog) of varying size and ecological importance.

Freshwater and coastal wetlands serve several important functions, including but not limited to groundwater recharge, sediment retention, floodwater retention, plant and animal habitat, fisheries habitat, educational and cultural values and cleansing of water that drains across the land to adjacent shellfish areas. Coastal wetlands are also one of the foundations of the marine food chain. The Harpswell Conservation Commission, Town committees and the State have developed detailed wetland information that now allows the Town to make informed judgments and policy decisions based on the relative functional values of wetlands and their vulnerability to development.

Occasionally, open fields that are still used for hay production or grazing break the forest cover. Other fields are unused and are in the process of reverting to forest. Offshore there are multiple small islands, many of which are designated as seabird nesting islands by the State. Many of Harpswell's intertidal areas are important feeding and staging areas for shorebirds, wading birds and migrating waterfowl, as are some inland wetlands. Eelgrass beds provide vital habitat for a number of important marine species. Bald eagles also nest and feed in Harpswell. In the spring as snow melts, vernal pools, important to rare amphibian, reptile and insect species, are formed for a few weeks. These intermittent wet areas provide critical reproductive cycle assistance to these species. These pools are often invisible except in spring which often leaves them susceptible to development.

Trends From 1998–2003, the Town issued over 300 building permits for new residential construction. Assuming an average two acres of land for each new residential unit, over 600 acres of undeveloped land, most of it in forest and a small proportion in wetlands, has been converted to residential use. Where new roads have been built to accommodate new units, additional acreage in forest has been lost and streams and wetlands have been crossed which increases the problems of runoff. Sometimes such roads fragment large remaining undeveloped areas of wildlife habitat into smaller pieces which reduces the diversity and/or abundance of wildlife species.

Analysis/Issues Wetlands, streams, vernal pools, mud flats, eelgrass beds, the sea and off-shore islands are the most important wildlife habitats in Harpswell; and wetlands and streams in particular are in short supply when Harpswell is compared to Maine as a whole. One critical natural resource policy issue is the need to extend selected shoreland

zoning protections to forested wetlands and wetlands of less than 10 acres. Another issue is managing new road locations to minimize habitat fragmentation. A related issue is the need to limit development impacts on upland wildlife habitat and the remaining travel corridors which are used by various species to find food and mates. Other issues involve erosion and sedimentation controls, runoff pollution of marine waters, and identification and protection of vernal pools.

Goal: Preserve and protect sufficient habitat to maintain current diversity and health of wildlife.

❖ *Policies*

- Ensure that new development does not encroach upon critical natural areas or essential wildlife habitats.
- Require setbacks from all five+ acre wetlands and streams that drain into the ocean sufficient to protect their ecological value and functions, and their integrity as wildlife habitat.
- Encourage the owners of wetlands, vernal pools and other essential wildlife habitats to use their property in a manner which does not jeopardize the habitat value of their land.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Identify and map critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats and travel corridors.
- Create and adopt a Town Open Space Plan.
- Develop ways for critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats to be preserved while allowing the landowner beneficial use of his or her property.
- Revise land use ordinances to protect the functions and values of the town's larger wetlands and its streams that drain into the ocean.
- Develop and implement a plan for protecting critical upland habitat, wildlife travel corridors and vernal pools. Explore the use of conservation easements, land acquisition, transfer of development rights and managing the location of new roads to help accomplish this.

HOUSING

Background Harpswell has benefited from a demographic mix, both economic and cultural, of residents who enhance the community's quality of life. However, market forces and demographic trends threaten to change the composition of Harpswell. Harpswell is the least affordable community in the Bath-Brunswick housing market, and possibly in the entire State of Maine. Nearly all the town's year-round housing is single-family housing and most of it is owner-occupied. Year-round rental housing is in short supply, and there are very few duplex or multifamily buildings available. There are some renter and owner-occupied mobile homes on individual lots in Harpswell. As of 2000, about 22% of the year round owner-occupied housing stock dates from 1939 or earlier, about 19% from 1940 – 1969, and about 59% from 1970 through 2000. For year-round renter-occupied housing, these percentages are about 28%, 22% and 50% respectively.

Trends Harpswell is in the midst of a profound change from being primarily a fishing and marine industries town to becoming a predominantly wealthy bedroom community and retirement community. This is reflected in the rapidly increasing price of land and property. The median sale price of a single-family home in Harpswell has increased from \$167,000 in 1995, to \$251,000 in 2000, to an estimated \$495,000 in 2004. A family would have to earn over \$155,000 -- more than three times Harpswell's median family income of \$46,000 -- to afford the median-priced home. The State's land valuation for Harpswell is now doubling every 4 years. By contrast, the median sale price for a home in Brunswick in 2000 was \$129,000. The median home price in Harpswell among all Maine towns has gone from 6th highest in 2002 to 4th highest in 2003, and preliminary statistics indicate it may be the highest in Maine for 2004⁴. Clearly, wages and salaries of people in Harpswell and surrounding towns are not rising at nearly the same rate as land, home prices and rents. There is already a chronic shortage of housing affordable for renters, first-time homebuyers, elderly households and individuals in need of assistance with mobility and day-to-day living. Land prices away from the waterfront may be driven upward by the limited supply of inland house lots in Harpswell. The teardown phenomenon also contributes to rapidly rising property values, fueling the increase of insurance costs and property taxes on surrounding properties. Mobile homes are allowed throughout Harpswell, but the rising price of land makes it increasingly limited as an affordable housing option.

Analysis/Issues All of these statewide, regional, and local trends add up to an increasing shortage of affordable housing in Harpswell. Although such a shortage is common to the region and the state, it is more acute here. In addition, national market forces are compounding the issue: the proportion of real estate transfers to out-of-state buyers continues to increase. In the past 3 years, out-of-state homebuyers paid an average of 1.5 times as much for a home in Maine as Maine residents. As the price of a home on Harpswell's shor efront continues to rise the assessed value of nearby properties increases.

⁴ Statistics from Maine State Housing Authority.

Lack of affordable housing reduces our community's diversity. Our community character reflects our diverse population. If recent trends continue, Harpswell will become a community of small households headed by an increasingly older population. With rising housing prices and no new multi-unit development, young individuals and families just starting out, even those with average incomes, will not be able to call Harpswell their home. A lack of diversity of population may slowly erode the vibrancy of life in Harpswell. Young families and their children become involved in local schools, sports and recreation. Some citizens become active in local government, social clubs and other community-based organization. Still other residents help to keep the fishing industry important to the local economy. To preserve this demographic mix, Harpswell must regulate new development in order to provide a range of housing opportunities.

The Town has little control over most factors contributing to rising housing costs. Even the cost of maintaining some Town services at present levels is rising, and local taxes may reflect this increase in the future. However, the Town can influence the availability of housing by how it regulates new development. Currently, Harpswell regulations do not prevent any form of housing from being developed almost anywhere that new residential structures are allowed.

According to the federal government, an affordable house, including insurance and taxes, must not cost more than 30% of the household's total income. In Harpswell, two in five renters and one in five homeowners are paying over a third of their household income in housing costs. A higher proportion of Harpswell households are burdened with higher housing costs than is true for nearby towns or Maine as a whole. Almost 85% of residents surveyed in 2002 said that some form of affordable housing is needed, particularly for seniors, people who work in Harpswell, and young people starting out.

The goal of the State of Maine is that each municipality should seek to assure that at least 10% of all new housing is affordable to low and moderate income households (those earning less than 80% of median household income for Cumberland County). Since the price of housing will likely continue to rise faster than the median household income, the need for affordable housing in Harpswell will be well above 10%. If Harpswell is to provide for a housing supply that can meet the needs of a full range of household types, diverse ages, and income and workforce skills, the Town will need to take proactive steps.

Goal: Provide a range of housing opportunities to meet the needs of Town residents.

❖ *Policies:*

- Provide opportunities for a range of suitable housing types to maintain Harpswell's diversity of people from first time home buyers to retirees.
- Quantify current and future housing needs to determine adequacy of local housing stock.

- Provide all residents an opportunity to give input on the direction the community is taking in regard to housing.
- Develop a regional view of housing in Harpswell by participating in studies and other activities with neighboring Towns.
- Pursue the development of 5-10 new affordable housing units annually over the next ten years.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Modify Town ordinances to provide incentives for building affordable housing
- Require major subdivisions to provide affordable housing or contribute toward affordable housing elsewhere in Town.
- Ensure that local development regulations do not result in unnecessary development costs, particularly for the development of modestly priced, single family housing.
- A Housing Committee should be established to determine demand and need for various housing types and to assist and promote affordable housing.
- Encourage a small, subsidized housing development to meet the Town's affordable housing needs.
- To provide greater housing opportunities the Town should sponsor educational sessions on credit, home ownership, and other issues related to housing.
- Create a work plan and timetable for new affordable housing over the next 5 years.
- Identify programs, mechanisms, and approaches to develop affordable housing.
- Investigate funding and possible sponsors for affordable housing development from various sources (federal, state, private, and non-profit).
- Create or connect with public/private partnerships interested in affordable housing issues.
- Provide support and referrals to programs such as meals-on-wheels, health care, transportation and personal services to elderly people to assure that they can remain in their homes as long as possible.

Housing as related to Land Use

Background Land use regulations can have a significant effect on the cost of housing development. They have a strong influence on the supply of land for housing development within a municipality. They can determine where housing is allowed and is not allowed, as well as what types of housing can be developed, and at what density. Subdivision regulations that set minimum construction standards for roads, a major element of development expense, also influence the cost of development. On the one hand, land use regulations of residential uses can help protect neighborhood values, individual property values, public safety, environmental quality, and other amenities. On the other, they may add cost to housing development that must be passed on to homebuyers if developers and landowners are to make a profit on their land and construction. Every community tries to balance these competing community values.

Trends In Harpswell, with few exceptions, local land use regulations do not prohibit housing development of any kind in any location. All forms of year-round and seasonal

housing are permitted nearly everywhere. Only within the 75' minimum setback from the shore and from wetlands subject to shoreland zoning is year-round housing development prohibited. Other critical areas, such as Resource Protection District, severely limit new housing construction. Seasonal housing is allowed everywhere except in Commercial Fisheries I Zone. The minimum lot size in Harpswell is 40,000 sq. ft. in or out of the shoreland zone, unless a subdivision is being created, in which case, 80,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size is required. In response to private roadway maintenance issues in recent years, the Town has adopted a Roads Ordinance that sets minimum construction standards for roads in subdivisions.

Analysis/Issues The Town of Harpswell is less restrictive than most coastal towns in southern Maine concerning the range of housing types and allowable density that are permitted. Unlike many towns, Harpswell has not chosen limited areas within which to allow mobile home parks; under law they are allowed wherever they can meet state licensing requirements and local subdivision approval. Conversely the Town's ordinances are stringent in regards to the construction of multifamily homes by requiring, at a minimum, 40,000 sq. ft per dwelling unit. This is evident by the fact that no new multifamily housing has been built in Harpswell since the 1980s.

If land use regulations are to provide for affordable housing they will need to be adjusted. One such adjustment may be to require or to provide incentives for subdividers to create and sell some minimum proportion of new housing units at prices that are affordable to households that are now priced out of the market. Some communities have done this effectively by requiring that a set percentage of the units in a subdivision will be marketed at affordable prices. Another effective method may be to provide a density bonus to subdividers who agree to create affordable units. Regulations that allow smaller minimum road frontages per unit can facilitate creation of affordable housing units. Smaller minimum road length can lead to lower per unit development costs. It is likely, however, that Harpswell's high land prices will work against developers utilizing optional affordable housing incentives without other measures, such as partnering with a non-profit housing development agency, a land trust interested in reserving land for affordable housing, or State or federal housing programs. One such program is Maine's new tax increment financing program for affordable housing. Another form of financial assistance that could work well with affordable housing-friendly land use regulations is the dedication of municipal land for development of affordable housing. However it is accomplished, development of affordable housing units will require a combination of land use regulation and other non-regulatory institutional support.

❖ *Policy*

- Encourage development of a variety of housing types, including apartments, condominiums, cluster or open space housing, affordable housing.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Develop a variety of housing densities and open space requirements for subdivisions to encourage a greater range housing types in Town.
- For the purpose of allowing multi family housing development the Town will revise land use ordinances to authorize the Planning Board to reduce minimum lot sizes for projects that meet necessary standards to protect public health and safety.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Background A community's character can be divided into two major elements: physical character and cultural character.

Harpswell's physical character owes much to its seagoing and farming heritage. Moving around its islands and peninsulas reveals a pattern of rural areas alternating with villages oriented mostly around sheltered harbors. Rural areas offer views of field and forest with scattered houses along main roads. Scenic ocean vistas open up nearer to the sea. Closely settled villages surround working waterfronts and are peppered with historic structures. Waterfront neighborhoods, both old and new, seasonal and year-round, abound to take advantage of wonderful views and ready access to recreational boating. Within the villages and waterfront neighborhoods, buildings tend to be of similar scale, smaller in older areas and larger in newer areas. Throughout Town, boats and fishing gear stored in yards are constant reminders of our past and present maritime orientation. Mud flats, eel grass beds, wetlands, streams, forests and vernal pools provide critical habitat for the wildlife which enriches our lives.

Harpswell's cultural character also reflects our connection to the sea. An active and healthy marine economy underlies the fishing flavor of town. Summer cottages and colonies, boatyards and marinas, and shores dotted with pleasure boats speak to our heritage as a tourist, seasonal and recreational haven. Our town meeting form of government with its active volunteer committees and our volunteer run community organizations providing everything from fire and emergency services to land conservation and historic preservation sustain our sense of living in a small and close knit community. Our numerous churches and meeting halls evidence our community spirit. Scattered small businesses serve local needs. Home occupations are a significant factor of our economy, and, along with other the small businesses, help to sustain our sense of self-reliance.

Trends Substantial population growth and second home development over the last 30 years have begun to change our community character. Farming and forestry have nearly disappeared from our economy although their traces contribute substantially to the scenic and rural character of Harpswell. While most new development has occurred along the shore, new homes along our main roads have begun to break up the fields and forest which underlie the Town's rural character. New shorefront development and seasonal home conversions have changed the views of Harpswell from the water and created new threats to the quality of the town's marine environment. The diversity and sustainability of the wildlife, which enriches our lives, are at risk from habitat fragmentation by new roads and other adverse impacts of new development. Some areas of town are becoming suburbanized with cookie cutter, two-acre subdivisions eating up open land while new driveways and side roads increase traffic congestion and decrease safety. Increasing demands are put upon our limited groundwater supplies and upon the capacity of our soils to treat septic waste. Decreased groundwater recharge from development adds to storm water run-off threats to our marine resources. While the marine economy remains

a mainstay of Harpswell's economy, recreational piers and moorings can conflict with commercial fishing activities.

Our active marine economy, historic villages and structures, coastal vistas and rural character, and our closeness to the employment opportunities available in larger cities and towns make Harpswell a very desirable as a place to live. Nearby well paying jobs in Portland, Brunswick, Bath and Augusta are transforming Harpswell from a primarily rural, fishing and tourism community into a bedroom community. Along with retirees, these commuters make up the majority of townspeople. Rising land prices have made affordable housing difficult to keep or to come by for many people of more modest means, even away from the water. Rising land values also threaten the sustainability of working waterfronts. The demolition of older small-scale waterfront homes and their replacement with much larger homes is changing the character of older waterfront neighborhoods. New owners sometimes close off traditional waterfront access over private lands while publicly owned water access is insufficient for the townspeople's needs. A diminishing younger population is leading to lower school enrollments and loss of diversity. An increasingly older population is creating new needs for services. Longer commutes reduce the ability of our volunteer emergency services to respond during the workday.

Business development in Harpswell, other than that associated with the marine economy, has been small in scale compared to commercial and industrial development in the neighboring towns of Bath, Brunswick, Freeport and Topsham, and serves mostly very local needs. Because Harpswell has a limited infrastructure and is on the way to nowhere but itself, that is likely to continue. Home occupations are expected to remain a significant part of the town's economic future.

The people of Harpswell have responded to these trends by strengthening its shoreland zoning, site plan and subdivision ordinances that regulate new development, and by supporting a growing number of private conservation measures by which individual landowners can commit their land to conservation. The town has increased its knowledge of local groundwater conditions to learn more about how and where to direct new development in order to protect the groundwater from contamination and assure adequate quality and quantity in the future. The town has expanded its government facilities and activities to meet the increasing needs of its people and requirements resulting from its growth.

Analysis/Issues If Harpswell is to sustain its present desirable community character in the face of inevitable population and second home growth, more needs to be done. As the Town grows, its historic and rural character, its groundwater resources, its marine resources, its marine economy, its forestry, its scenic and habitat values, and its public access to the sea and open space, may all suffer significant losses in the next ten years, if they are not supported and protected through sound comprehensive planning and growth management. Although the town's recent changes to ordinances have helped, as have local conservation efforts, still more needs to be done to achieve and protect Harpswell's community character.

The marine economy and our working waterfronts need to be further protected from residential development pressures and even given room to expand. Our marine environment and habitat essential to sustaining the diversity and abundance of our wildlife needs to be sheltered further from the adverse effects of poorly managed growth and development. Continuation of our pattern of rural areas and villages needs to be sustained. The scale of traditional waterfront neighborhoods needs to be maintained. Suburbanization of rural areas needs to be slowed. The contribution of our scenic vistas, historic structures and one-time farms to our sense of community needs to be assured. Diversity of population needs to be maintained. A full range of housing opportunities needs to be available. Water access needs to be protected and improved. Our vital groundwater supplies need to be protected from further contamination and excessive drawdown. Our volunteer public services and organizations need to be further supported.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee conducted a public opinion survey and held a visioning session in 2002 to get a clear picture of the townspeople's priorities for responding to the many ways community character is changing in response to growth. These have been incorporated into the policies and action recommendations in this Plan. From an article on the May 2002 visioning session in the July 2002 issue of the *Harpswell Anchor*:

General qualities most often mentioned were:

- Closeness of the ocean
- Natural beauty, views, and recreational opportunities
- Neighborliness and a strong sense of community
- Diversity of people
- Rural nature of town
- Spirit of volunteerism, integrity of people, caring nature of community

What People Envision for Their Neighborhoods

Cundy's Harbor

- Maintain village character
- New homes clustered to preserve open space
- Maintain walkability
- Continue the community as a working fishing village
- Maintain a limited number of small shops
- Affordable housing for retired fishermen and seniors

Great Island/Route 24/Mountain Road

- Preserve and connect open space with trails and bike paths
- Town center on Mountain Road with Town Hall, a post office, library, teen center
- Public landings with parking
- Protect ocean from pollution, jet skis, fast boats
- Affordable housing

Orr's and Bailey Islands

- Limit growth due to limited groundwater and density of development
- Public access to ocean and beaches with parking
- Strengthen village quality around Orr's I. library and post office
- Preserve Mackerel Cove as working harbor
- Preserve remaining open space

South Harpswell

- Continue as multiple-use area with tourism, recreation, fishing
- Maintain/expand access to ocean
- Preserve historic quality of Pott's Point and Auburn Colony
- Plan for recreational, fishing and limited commercial use of fuel depot
- Control septic pollution of ocean

North Harpswell

- Create affordable housing
- Preserve mix of forest and field
- Limit size and number of commercial uses on Route 123
- Increase public access to ocean
- Connect open space with walking and bike paths

Future Development Preferences

Participants were asked finally to locate and identify where and what kind of future growth should occur. Given the choices of single-family homes, multifamily homes, and new business development, folks emphasized the following:

- More interest in new waterfront business was expressed than for single-family homes. Locations for new business development covered all neighborhoods with emphasis on the fuel depot, Cundy's Harbor and the south end of Bailey Island.
- Multi-family housing was favored over single-family with locations over most of the town.
- Elderly/special needs housing was also of particular interest with emphasis on locations near Town Hall, in Cundy's Harbor and in the Wood Landing Road area.
- The Community Drive area next to the Town Hall stood out as the single area in town where all forms of development were suggested: elderly/special needs housing, multifamily housing, business development and single family housing in that order of preference.
- Other clusters of mixed uses appeared in Cundy's Harbor, Route 123 between Hawthorne Lane and Spy Rock Road, Lookout Point and Allen Point Roads along Route 123, and Route 123 south of the Brunswick line."

From these sources it is clear that there is support for further actions to better manage the tide of change in which the community finds itself. Because this topic area is so broad, and relates directly to other major goals, much of what is needed will be reflected in goals, policies and action recommendations listed under other topic areas as well as this section.

Goal: Manage growth and development so as to maintain Harpswell's community character.

❖ *Policies*

- To maintain our traditional pattern of alternating rural and village development and to minimize suburbanization and sprawl, encourage new growth to locate in villages and existing neighborhoods while directing new growth away from the most rural areas. Maintain the rural views from our roads. Direct new commercial and institutional development to the villages and the town center.
- To sustain our marine economy, protect the working waterfront from pressures for alternative development and maintain critical access to the water.
- To sustain our maritime commercial and recreational heritage, expand opportunities for new marine economic activity, protect our marine environment from pollution and manage our harbors to maximize available space and minimize conflicts.
- To maintain the diversity and abundance of our wildlife, protect essential habitat from the adverse effects of development.
- To sustain our traditional sense of connection to the land, preserve the rural character of our landscape, our farming and forestry environment, and our open spaces.
- To maintain our relationship to the sea, protect our scenic vistas, and protect and improve public access to the water.
- To maintain diversity of population, provide opportunities for affordable housing in the face of rising land values.
- To sustain our connection with the past, encourage protection of our historic structures and the scale of our traditional neighborhoods.
- To protect our health and meets our needs, protect our groundwater from contamination and overuse.
- To sustain our sense of self reliance and independence and our sense of community, continue support of home occupations and our volunteer public services and community organizations.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Amend land use ordinances to increase density of development in villages and decrease density of development in rural areas. Maintain present density in rural and waterfront neighborhoods.
- Amend land use ordinances to direct new commercial and institutional development to villages and the town center.
- Amend land use ordinances to maintain rural views from main roads and minimize new curb cuts.

- Amend land use ordinances to clarify essential working waterfronts and limit non-maritime uses in them.
- Amend land use ordinances to designate areas for expansion of marine economic activity.
- Amend land use ordinances to protect further the marine environment from pollution and other adverse impacts of development.
- Amend land use ordinances to protect essential wildlife habitat from the adverse effects of development.
- Upon development of a Town Open Space Plan, work to preserve and connect open spaces. Amend land use ordinances to support preservation and connection of open spaces.
- Identify critical scenic water vistas and adopt measures to preserve their contribution to our community character.
- Develop materials to educate and inform owners of large undeveloped lots of their options for preservation and conservation under state law and through land trusts.
- Encourage cooperative use of recreational wharves to minimize altering the natural appearance of our shoreline.
- In addition to increasing allowable density of development in village areas, continue to allow mobile and manufactured homes anywhere in town. Amend land use ordinances to encourage multifamily housing in village areas where septic treatment methods can protect groundwater quality and groundwater supplies are sufficient. Explore creation of a public program to provide for affordable housing.
- Undertake a program to identify and replace failed septic systems in villages.
- Identify and inventory historic structures in town and work with owners to protect their historic character.
- Develop a local plumbing code designed to reflect Harpswell's soil conditions and sewage treatment needs, take into account new septic technologies, and protect our groundwater quality.
- Continue and possibly expand town financial support for our volunteer emergency services.
- Conduct studies to determine available groundwater supply capacity in village areas.
- Undertake a program to acquire and develop new points of public water access.
- Survey the Town-owned land in the Town Center to determine its development constraints and develop a plan for its future use.
- Identify and inventory points of traditional public access to the water over private land. Work with landowners to perpetuate that access.

MARINE ECONOMY

Background Activities related to the sea have always been the backbone of Harpswell's economy as well as contributing a great deal to Harpswell's community character. Harpswell's marine economy has two major aspects: (1) commercial fishing and its related services and suppliers, and (2) recreational boating and its associated tourism, services and suppliers.

According to a 1999 Harpswell Fishing Industry Profile⁵, commissioned by the Town, Harpswell had one of the highest concentrations of commercial fishing on the Maine coast. The report estimated that there were about 200-250 active licensed commercial fishermen and about an equal number of full and part time crew. The core of the local commercial fleet was estimated then at 236 fishing boats, of which 201 were lobster boats. There are 15-20 commercial fishing wharves scattered about Harpswell.

The 1999 report estimated that commercial fishing based in Harpswell provides full or part time employment for between 400 to 500 persons locally. Another 60-80 Harpswell jobs were in related local services and suppliers. Local restaurants and seafood sellers also depend directly on marine resource harvesters. Overall, the report estimated that fishing related occupations probably represent 50% to 60% of local full and part time jobs.

Shellfish harvesting is also important to the Town's marine economy with about 85 commercial shellfish harvesters in Town. The Town operates a strong shellfish conservation and enforcement program.

Harpswell also has two marina/boatyards, at least two additional boatyards, at least one boat builder and a commercial kayaking outfit, all of which generate demand for additional services and supplies. Many summer and year-round residents own recreational boats and spend money locally operating and maintaining them. Food and lodging facilities around Harpswell depend for part of their business on Harpswell's attraction for recreational boaters and waterfront users.

While there are no specific job numbers available for tourist businesses, second home construction and recreational boating businesses, it is clear those jobs added to commercial fishing jobs make up the lion's share of local employment.

Trends Commercial fishing and shellfishing in Harpswell remains strong. In 2004, the total number of commercial marine harvester licenses in Harpswell was 630, of which 85 are for commercial shellfish harvesting. Excluding the commercial shellfish harvesting licenses, there are 545 licenses that are held by 375 commercial fishermen giving Harpswell as their principal port. In 1999, there were at least 419 boats used in connection with commercial marine harvesting licenses in Harpswell. In 2004, there

⁵ Report available at Town Office

were 436 boats of which 224 were lobster boats. The number of commercial fishing wharves has increased somewhat in recent years.

In 1993, 50% of Harpswell's shellfish areas were closed to harvesting although that figure was a substantial improvement over past peak closure such as the closure of 89% of Harpswell's shoreline to clamming for part of 1989. Since the inception of the State's overboard discharge removal program in 1994, the number of licensed overboard discharges has been reduced from 127 to 93 (27%) reduction. Nonetheless, a significant portion of the town's shellfish areas remain closed due to pollution or the existence of the remaining licensed overboard discharges.

Recreational activity on and along the waterfront continues to grow as Harpswell's year-round and seasonal residents increase in number. In 2004, the Town approved a rezoning to enable a local marina to expand to meet increasing demand. The pace of second home development, and the jobs it supports, is strongly related to the attraction of Harpswell's seashore. The demand for mooring in Harpswell has increased substantially as harbors elsewhere have filled to capacity. Nature-based tourism is a growing business locally and statewide.

Analysis/Issues Increasingly, Harpswell's fishermen find themselves in conflict with the growth in recreational and residential development over continued access to the water, living on the waterfront, use of marine facilities, mooring space, and damage to and limitations on setting fishing gear. Among the issues discussed by those who were interviewed for the 1999 Harpswell Fishing Industry Profile, "there were several topics that were common to all of the interviews and focus groups. These included the following concerns:

1. There is a potential for future losses of commercial fishing uses under real estate pressure for sale or conversion to non-fishing uses.
2. The Town will face increasing pressure to deal with issues of harbor management, moorings control, and enforcement as recreational and transient boating use continues to expand in Harpswell.
3. Ultimately, the continuity of the fishing industry depends on adequate waterfront access. Existing public access points owned by the Town do not provide parking. As real estate values escalate and development pressures increase at the waterfront, the availability of privately owned access points may diminish.
4. The heritage and community character of Harpswell are defined by the presence of a commercial fishing industry. As the Town attracts more growth and investment in waterfront property, the future land uses that are allowed in the shorefront zones could determine how that character changes or is retained."

While the recent increase in commercial fishing wharves indicates that this vital access is being maintained, the future threat of working waterfront loss to residential development remains.

Some 20 publicly owned (Town and State) points of access in Town provide some assurance of continued access to the water and flats for shellfish harvesters. However, the lack of parking and other facilities at some of these access points limits their usefulness to shellfish harvesters.

All of these issues need to be addressed by the Town.

Goal: Encourage and promote the retention and growth of marine economic activities including but not limited to fishing, shell fishing, boat building, tourism and marine supply and service.

❖ *Policies*

- Preserve and protect vital water access for commercial fishermen and other economic activities that support the Town's working waterfronts and strengthen the Town's marine economy.
- Pursue actions consistent with the protection, conservation, maintenance, and restoration of shellfish habitat and other fishing resources.
- Consider an increase in marine related fees to support additional Town services provided for marine related issues.
- Allow marine related activities such as boat and gear storage and maintenance throughout the Town.
- Undertake actions to improve usefulness of existing public water access points and maintain traditional private access points for commercial fishing.
- Support further development of boat building, recreational boating and related activities.
- Support measures to strengthen tourism development that will complement the growth of the marine economy

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Adopt zoning and land use measures to protect working waterfronts from the pressure to convert them to residential use. Review the current Shoreland Zoning boundaries for the Commercial Fishing Districts to protect areas in Town that are critical to commercial fishing. Consider having more restrictive land uses in Commercial Fishing Zones. Consider other land use ordinance changes to encourage boat building and economic activity related to recreational boating
- Hold public forums to identify and establish working waterfronts in Harpswell.
- Continue to provide funding for effective shellfish conservation and enforcement.
- Develop harbor management plans for crowded mooring areas.
- Resolve title issues of public access points and develop adequate parking and maneuvering space at them.
- Publicize the importance of marine related activities to Harpswell' s local economy and potential threats to the vitality of the industry.

- Create an informational database to monitor the health and well being of commercial fishing and tourism in Town.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Background Harpswell's community facilities and services include general government, schools, recycling, recreation, police, fire and emergency response, libraries, and transportation infrastructure. The Town depends on various committees, boards, and commissions, to advise the Selectmen. Harpswell has a high level of volunteer participation on these committees. The experience and special knowledge these volunteers offer are invaluable.

Trends Facilities and services necessary to support the Town's growth and development have increased in quantity, quality and cost over the past ten years. The Town has eliminated its solid waste incinerator and landfill and established a new recycling center. Harpswell has recently completed a major expansion of the Town office building. It serves to accommodate a broader range of municipal services. The Town has received the former Fuel Depot property on Harpswell Neck from the Navy and designated the 118.5-acre property as George J. Mitchell Field. As demand for Town services has been triggered by increased population, the population's age profile also is changing. According to the 2000 Census, older adult and senior age groups increasingly represent a larger portion of the population while population in school age children and young adult age groups has been declining.

Analysis/Issues A major challenge facing the Town is how to respond to the changing service demands that come with a growing and changing population. These challenges include maintaining neighborhood schools in a period of declining enrollment, and anticipating and determining how best to respond to changing municipal service needs that come with these shifts. Concurrently, the Town's ownership of land has greatly expanded, thereby providing new opportunities for a variety of municipal, housing, and/or economic development uses. These trends may further strain the ability of volunteers and existing Town staff to continue providing services at current levels. Accordingly, questions for the Town in coming years concern how to more effectively coordinate volunteer, staff and elected officials' activities, and consideration of new forms of Town governance, administration and public safety / emergency response.

Town Administration

Background Harpswell governs itself through a Town Meeting – Selectmen – Town Administrator form of government. There are three Selectmen, an elected Town Clerk, an elected Tax Collector, an elected Town Treasurer, and an elected Road Commissioner. The Town Administrator oversees the activities of the several Town departments, including Assessing, Codes Enforcement, Planning, the Recycling Center and Transfer Station, and Recreation.

Trends Since 1993, the Town has increased its staff as needed to address growing service demands that have accompanied the Town's growth and development. These have included the addition of the Town Administrator position, more codes enforcement

staff, a full-time town planner, staff changes appropriate to switching from a Town incinerator to a recycling center and transfer station, a recreation director, and additional clerical and support staff. In addition to the Planning Board, Board of Appeals, Budget Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Solid Waste Committee and Marine Resources Committee, there are also a Harbor & Waterfront Committee, Fire and Rescue Committee, Recreation Committee, Library Committee, a Comprehensive Plan Committee, and a Town Lands Committee.

Analysis/Issues As Town Committees have grown in number, their respective roles have sometimes been unclear or apparently duplicative. With assistance of Town committees and others, the Selectmen will clarify roles of Town committees and boards by creating specific descriptions of the responsibilities for each. These descriptions will prescribe the respective authority of each committee, and to whom each reports. Annual work agendas should be cooperatively developed with priorities, reporting requirements, timelines, and possible funding requirements.

Goal: Provide services and facilities to meet the Town's needs, now and in the future.

❖ *Policies*

- Continue the tradition of volunteer service through boards and committees to provide Town government with broad public participation in determining the Town's future and how services are best provided.
- Ensure the Town is providing information, referral and services to maintain and meet the needs of a diverse population including health care, transportation, social services, recreation, and others.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- A Governance Committee will study the capacity of town services and explore possible regional and state resources to ensure that the needs of residents are met. This would include, but not be limited to, services such as Town administration, recreation, police, fire & rescue, education and waste disposal.
- Form a volunteer advisory group of residents to conduct a comprehensive inventory of quality of life concerns of senior population. Identify basic needs of food, shelter, and health; determine deficits and identify means to solve problems (including regional efforts and grant monies). Additional concerns about transportation and recreation should be addressed.

Codes Enforcement Office

Background Proper codes enforcement is the front line of land use protection in town. Without it, land use ordinances and conditions of approval are not effective. The Codes Enforcement Office receives and reviews applications for building permits, plumbing permits, and other local permits required under the Town's land use ordinances and the

State Plumbing Code. The Office also helps landowners and contractors to navigate these ordinances, alerting them to any need for approval from the Planning Board or Board of Appeals, and/or state or federal permits that they also may need. Codes Enforcement Officers, including the local plumbing inspector, are responsible to inspect for compliance with such codes and conditions as construction proceeds, as staff time allows. When violations occur, the Codes Enforcement Office is responsible for enforcing the ordinance standards.

Trends Over the past several years the Town has experienced a heavy burden of applications for new construction of homes, additions and wharves. Applications for new homes alone have averaged 50 per year. Until the late 1990's, the Town attempted to meet its codes enforcement needs with one part-time codes enforcement officer. The volume of activity was such that the Town ultimately expanded its codes enforcement staff to two full time codes officers and a secretary. Subsequently, Town permit records have been better organized to keep them updated. In addition, the burden on codes enforcement staff from assisting the Planning Board with development review has been reduced with the hiring of a Town Planner and a Planning Assistant.

Analysis/Issues While a significant progress has been made, the Town still has codes enforcement issues to be addressed. Given Town growth, review times for applications may now be longer as they compete with on-going enforcement duties. Applications for land use permits that are approved by the Planning Board or the Board of Appeals are often approved with conditions. In some cases, applicants or their contractors do not adhere to these conditions. Land use ordinances in their current form are published in several individual documents – the Basic Land Use Ordinance, Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Site Plan Review Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and a Definitions Addendum. Organized with the intent of enabling applicants to obtain one ordinance that pertains to their particular application, in fact, the ordinances often have overlapping application, requiring more than one ordinance to properly address all code requirements. There is no broadly published notice of building or land use permits issued. Public knowledge of permits issued contributes to an informed citizenry, thereby assisting codes enforcement through their awareness of properly permitted activities. The Codes Enforcement Officers must balance land use concerns with private property rights. Since the Town's valuable groundwater and ocean resources are shared, responsibility for their protection must be shared by all residents.

Goal: Assure that State and local regulations governing land use, plumbing, sewage disposal, and development are administered in a fair, conscientious, and even-handed manner.

❖ *Policies*

- Create awareness that Harpswell's land use regulations are designed to protect the public interest on behalf of the town residents.
- Develop a system for reviewing applications that ensures adequacy of the fee schedule to cover the costs, the ability of the Codes Office to review each application

in a timely manner, and allows for the necessary time for the Codes Officers to follow up on permits.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- The Codes Office should develop a systematic approach for ensuring that decisions by the Planning Board and Board of Appeals are complied with.
- Maintain a sufficient number of qualified Codes Enforcement Officers to handle the workload.
- Monitor all development and construction to assure that it is carried out in accordance with the applicable codes, regulations, and requirements of the project approval.
- Provide ongoing oversight of sewage disposal systems that are malfunctioning or illegal to assure that violations are addressed, and the resulting systems are functioning according to design, permit requirements, and local codes.
- Institute a public information program on septic system maintenance to assure that the public understands how these systems work and what actions are necessary to ensure their long-term operation.
- On a monthly basis the Codes Office will publish all building permits and certificates of completion at the Town Office and the Town website.

Waste Disposal

Background The Town's Recycling Center and Transfer Station is open most days during the week to receive a wide variety of recyclable materials. These materials are thereby removed from the waste stream and sold, in an effort to offset the expense of managing the Town's municipal solid waste. Materials presently being recycled include paper products, certain plastics, waste metals, glass, batteries, electronic goods, oil and paint cans. Bulk materials collected include construction & demolition debris, furniture, white goods, large metal items, propane tanks, tires, large batteries, ashes, brush, wood, leaves and yard wastes.

Trends In its implementation of the major recommendations of the '93 Plan, the Town's principal accomplishment has been the abandonment of its aged incinerator (dismantled in 1999) and the creation of a new transfer facility. A major function of the Harpswell Recycling Center continues to be the management and promotion of the Town's recycling efforts. Household waste is now collected at the center, compacted, and shipped to out-of-town landfills. In recent years the Recycling Center has raised the percentage of recycled materials to more than 50% of the waste material deposited. In 2002 the Town's reached a record 56.6% which is above State recycling goals. Substantial increases in total materials deposited have also been observed in recent years, due in part to extensive construction activity. All of these changes have been accomplished with only a modest increase in staff. Certification training has enhanced staff efficiency.

Analysis/Issues The sale of recyclable material assets offsets operational costs to some degree, but this revenue varies with changes in market demand and price. It therefore

remains to be seen whether increased usage will lead to higher operational costs, raising questions as to whether the Town should encourage residents to contract privately for trash hauling service. Such services transport waste-to-waste management facilities out of Town, thus reducing local trash recycling and cost. However, whether these services recycle as extensively as the Town does raise the question of their impact on the Town's ability to continue to meet or surpass state recycling goals.

Goal: Continue to plan for the Town's waste management needs to meet anticipated growth.

❖ *Policies*

- Maximize the revenues generated by recycling efforts and use them to offset the operating cost.
- Consider regional waste disposal efforts.
- Emphasize the use of incentives rather than penalties to stimulate more recycling.
- The town should commit resources to continuing the residential composting program.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Study the methods used by other towns to achieve higher rates of recycling.
- Continue and expand the Town's recycling program.
- Provide periodic opportunities for disposal of items not currently accepted at the recycling center, including but not limited to automobiles and household hazardous materials.
- Budget annually for public outreach programs to educate the Town's residents about the value of recycling.
- Recycling Committee and others will publish informational guides that explain the costs associated with waste disposal and the potential savings associated with waste-reduction and increased recycling. Particular emphasis will be placed on the environmental and personal benefits of reducing purchases of non-recyclable goods.
- Recycling Committee and others will consider methods for monitoring the improper disposal of waste that should be recycled.
- Research the merits of creating a Town composting program.

Schools and Education

Background Harpswell is a member, along with Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, and Topsham in S.A.D 75. There are four S.A.D 75 Board members elected from Harpswell. Harpswell students attend the West Harpswell and Harpswell Island elementary schools, and Mt. Ararat Middle School and Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham. In April 2004 total school enrollment in all grades for students from Harpswell was 598.

Trends The Town's elementary school age population has fallen by 36% over ten years, down from 359 students in 1990 to 255 in 2000. This loss is partly due to the move of grade 6 to Mt. Ararat Middle School. Prior to the move of grade 6, enrollment was 21%

less, due to population losses. In 2003-4, the total elementary school enrollment in Harpswell was 248 students, with 173 enrolled at Harpswell Island School and 75 at West Harpswell School.

Analysis/Issues The viability of the West Harpswell School is an ongoing concern due to shrinking enrollment. Board members are concerned about the lack of citizen involvement in Town education affairs. The Town's share of the S.A.D. budget is about \$5 million, nearly twice the Town's budget for all other services. This is comparable to Topsham's contribution although Topsham has nearly three times as many students as Harpswell. The disparity in local financial aid to the S.A.D. system reveals an unfair formula for allocating costs among towns in the district. Although Harpswell contributes a higher per student share to the S.A.D budget, it does not have a comparable voting voice on the Board.

Goal: Assure that the regional school system recognizes the changes in Harpswell's school-age population, and continues to provide a high level of education for the Town's children.

❖ *Policies*

- Maintain neighborhood stability with neighborhood schools.
- Seek greater equity in regional school funding formulas.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Work with the Town's legislative representatives to alter regional funding formulas to treat towns like Harpswell more fairly.
- To ensure the continued viability of Harpswell schools develop affordable housing to attract families with children to live in Harpswell.
- Selectmen and S.A.D. 75 will develop incentives such as seminars, workshops, and conferences to attract citizens to assume a more active role in educational policy.
- Study ways to maintain the viability of local schools.

Public Access

Background There are about 216 miles of shore frontage in Harpswell, the most of any town in Maine. Harpswell also has a long tradition of open and easy access to the shoreline and to the water. Boating, fishing, camping, picnicking, swimming, and duck hunting are just a few of the activities that take place on or near the water. There are approximately 20 publicly (Town and State) owned points of access to landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront, islands and waterways scattered throughout town. Generous individuals have allowed residents access to traditional shellfish beds and beaches over private property. There are also a number of points of water access available for a fee through private marinas, wharves, and docks. In recent years the work of the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust has protected even more of the traditional points of access through easements and purchases.

Trends In spite of this, the Town of Harpswell faces many challenges in maintaining access to the water. As the number of residents and summer visitors grows, Town landings have often become congested with vehicles and trailers due to limited parking space. This situation is frustrating to abutters, fishermen, and residents, and it poses a traffic safety concern. Many town landings are difficult to use because they need maintenance or repair. Others have been encroached upon by private development. Increasing development is also beginning to impact traditional access points through private property and on offshore islands.

Analysis/Issues The Town must re-examine the present situation, identify problems, and take appropriate action in guaranteeing access to the shore. This can be accomplished through a comprehensive approach that links access to open space and recreation, involves cooperation with groups like the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust, and educates and involves the public.

Goal: Provide safe and convenient access to the ocean including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways with access points distributed throughout Harpswell.

❖ *Policy*

- Provide adequate access throughout Harpswell to the ocean including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Develop a plan to improve condition and function of existing access points.
- Determine where new access points are needed and develop a plan to establish them.
- Inventory and map types of existing public access including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways.
- Identify access points most threatened by development and prioritize them for protection.

Recreation

Background In 1995, the Town established a Recreation Department, recognizing the role of the Town in providing local recreational opportunity. Prior to that time, the Town, at the request of the Recreation Committee, appropriated funds annually for out-of-town recreational activities for Harpswell children such as swimming and skiing lessons, Little League ball and youth hockey. The recreation program continues to depend heavily on volunteer participation.

Trends With the opening of the Trufant-Summerton Field on Route 24 in 1995, many new recreational opportunities in town were instituted. In 2002, the Town hired a part-time recreation director to plan and carry out a program of sports, exercise, arts, and life-

long learning and leisure activities for citizens of all ages. These programs benefit the community by contributing to the good health and well being of its citizens, and by building community cohesiveness as people come together from our geographically dispersed villages. National recognition of the need for increased physical activity, coupled with the pressures of development, has led the Town to continue developing lands for public use. Examples include the Cliff Trail behind the Town House and the planned Mountain Road walking path. The Town also recognizes the need to clarify and possibly increase protection of existing locations of public access to the water for swimming and boating.

Analysis/Issues Population growth and the increase in the average age of the population pose challenges where provision of recreation facilities and services are concerned. There is a shortage of local facilities for programs such as arts, music, crafts and pre-school and senior citizen offerings. Concurrently, the dispersal of the population among islands and peninsulas results in insufficient density to support such offerings in all three Town centers. The State Planning Office projects that school age population will drop from 638 students in 2002, to 447 in 2017. There also are challenges in communicating available programs and activities to all those who could take advantage of them. Contributing further to the problem is a shortage of usable open space that is accessible by the public at a time when remaining open space is subject to rapid development and subdivision pressures in the market place.

Goal: To enhance the quality of life and well-being of Harpswell's citizens both by continuing to preserve and develop its natural environment for outdoor recreation and by offering a well-planned recreation program of leisure, educational, arts and sports opportunities for all ages.

❖ *Policies*

- Ensure the Recreation Department has adequate staffing and resources to meet the demands of the department.
- Provide sufficient facilities, both indoor and outdoors, to meet current and future recreational and community uses.
- Continue to develop partnerships with surrounding towns and communities.
- Encourage availability of and access to traditional inland recreation opportunities such as hunting, hiking and cross-country skiing.

❖ *Actions Recommendations*

- Evaluate the need for further professional staffing for this rapidly growing department.
- Determine how long existing indoor town spaces can accommodate recreation activities, and examine the feasibility of constructing a centrally located recreation building.
- Evaluate outdoor spaces throughout the town for future recreational uses, including outdoor ice skating rinks, ball fields, walking routes, and playgrounds.

Mitchell Field

Background The former Fuel Depot site has been returned to the Town and named George J. Mitchell Field. The Town, in agreement with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Department of Defense, has determined that the Field may be used as a multipurpose site for the benefit of Harpswell residents.

Mitchell Field is an asset for the Town of Harpswell. The site is 118.5 acres of field and forest with 2,600+/- feet of water frontage on Middle Bay. Such a large undeveloped parcel presents the Town with both exciting potential and legitimate challenges to be considered.

The geographic location, on the southern portion of Harpswell Neck, of the site is such that it is isolated from major transportation routes and population densities. To avoid contamination from residual fuel in the ground, any pumping of ground water is limited to 450 gallons per day for the foreseeable future. This is barely more than enough to support a single household. Such factors suggest severely limited capabilities of the land to support business or residential activity. They do not seriously restrict recreational, educational or conservation uses.

Consideration should also be given to the water access of the site and the opportunities this may present for certain water dependent activities. The site provides ample opportunity for scenic vistas out over deep waters. However water dependent uses may be limited due to the exposed nature of the anchorage. The considerable cost anticipated to renovate (or demolish) the existing pier (estimated at \$1,000,000+) may limit the Town's ability to use the field for boating or fishing activities. While the land seemingly provides the Town a large undeveloped parcel on which it can shape future uses, these potential problems need to be recognized in any planning efforts the Town may undertake.

Goal: Within the site's limitations, utilize Mitchell Field to best serve the interests of Harpswell's people.

❖ Policies

- The initial primary use of Mitchell Field should be recreation, education and conservation.
- Resolve the future of the pier, water tower and existing buildings.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- The portion of the Field, south of the paved roadway that is wooded and largely undisturbed should be set aside for conservation and low impact recreation.
- Designate and develop the level area near the gate for active recreation, including the construction of playing fields to expand the recreational opportunities available to Harpswellians.
- Reserve the remainder of the field in its present condition pending exploration of potential future uses.
- Conduct a study to determine the costs and benefits of renovating or demolishing the pier or pursuing other alternatives.
- Develop a plan for use of the two dwellings and their land when they are finally given over to the Town. Among the possibilities are sale to provide funds to develop the rest of the field, rental to provide income for the operation of the field, and low income housing.
- Determine whether to remove or continue to use the water tower.

Police Services

Background Harpswell continues to contract with Cumberland County for policing through the Sheriff's office. Three deputy sheriffs maintain an office at the Town Office throughout the year. During the summer months, a fourth sheriff's deputy joins them. The County Sheriff's Office has been providing services under contract to Harpswell for about 30 years. The Cumberland County Sheriff's office, under contract with the Town, has also provided two marine patrol officers to serve as shellfish wardens in Harpswell.

Trends In 2001, the monthly number of calls received by the sheriff's deputies ranged from 160 to 270. In 2002, this number ranged from approximately 120 to 270. In 2003, the range was 140 to 270 calls per month. In each year the calls were highest in the summer months. In 2002, 25% of calls concerned crime, 31% concerned traffic, and 44% were for other reasons according to the Town Report. In 2003, these numbers were relatively unchanged, with 22% of calls concerning crime, 32% concerned with traffic, and 46% for other reasons. In 2004 crimes against people have increased in frequency in Harpswell, such as domestic violence (up 5.5 %), home invasions (up 6%), and assaults (up 15%). Calls in response to burglaries, are less frequent than in 2003.

Analysis/Issues Demand for police services in Harpswell is reasonably stable, and there seems little reason to anticipate major changes in that demand as the Town continues to develop. Contracting with the County Sheriff's office currently appears to be the most cost effective and responsive way to meet the Town's needs for the foreseeable future. For the Town to undertake this function on its own would require significant capital outlay and personnel cost.

Goal: Provide timely, cost-effective policing to all parts of Town.

❖ *Policy*

- Continue to rely on this regional form of policing as a cost-effective and reliable service.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Determine with the County how best to continue policing as the Town grows. Affordable housing may encourage deputies to live locally to enhance this service. This form of policing is a good example of provision of local services by a regional government.
- Expand the data obtained from Sheriff's Department to include information on items such as response times to calls, investigations conducted and closure rates.

Fire and Rescue

Background Townspeople have long maintained volunteer fire and rescue departments on Harpswell Neck and on each of the three large islands. The Town contributes a portion of their annual operating costs and between \$20,000 and \$25,000 for capital costs to each of these volunteer companies. The Cundy's Harbor Fire Department serves Great Island, the Orr's & Bailey Island Fire Department serves both of those islands with a station on each, and the Harpswell Neck Fire Department serves Harpswell Neck from a station in South Harpswell. Ambulance service is run as a part of each of the three departments. Ambulance service is provided free of charge by the Cundy's Harbor and Orr's & Bailey Departments. Harpswell Neck has recently begun charging for service. There are no paid staff in any of the departments, which are all volunteer.

Trends During the past several years, major plant investments include a new station for Bailey Island, expansion of the Cundy's Harbor station, and a new tank truck for Harpswell Neck. As technology advances, there are growing demands for specialized training and equipment to better protect Harpswell with its increased population and growing number of structures. Older volunteers are more common, and often better trained as well as more experienced than younger volunteers. The cost of equipment replacement and new equipment has risen steeply in the last several years and is projected to continue to rise. While the Department Chiefs all say they are currently well equipped, there are some pieces of equipment that will need replacement during the next 10 years.

Analysis/Issues It appears that Harpswell is best served with this decentralized system because of its geography. A concern is the aging of the fire and rescue volunteers whose capacities are reduced with age. Not enough younger recruits are volunteering to replace and assist older volunteers.

Goal: Provide timely and appropriate levels of emergency service to all parts of Town.

❖ *Policies*

- Provide emergency fire and rescue services on the current decentralized basis until growth and development patterns change.
- The Town should consider some paid fire and rescue personnel at a time in the future when it is apparent that the all-volunteer service is no longer sufficient to meet the demands.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Consider strategies to attract citizens to volunteer for emergency services. This would be less costly in the long run than creating a central paid emergency service.
- Monitor the provision of these services as the Town grows, to ensure adequate coverage in the future.

Transportation System

Background Harpswell's roads and bridges constitute its primary transport network, linking it to the mainland. Routes 123 and 24 connect Harpswell with the mainland and Brunswick. The Mountain Road is the principal east-west route, and it connects these two state-aid highways with each other. The Cundy's Harbor Road connects Cundy's Harbor with Route 24. All other roads in Harpswell are local side roads leading to coastal development or, more recently, inland development with a low-density suburban layout. Traffic on these roads is generally much lower than on the main routes, but these roads sometimes slope steeply to the shore and are subject to erosion and/or grade changes that can make winter travel treacherous and emergency access difficult. Nearly all of such roads are private roads. The property owners are responsible for their maintenance.

Trends In 1990, 79.5% of Harpswell's workforce, or some 1,801 residents, commuted out of Town to work. Only 20.5% of Harpswell's workforce lived and worked in Harpswell. By 2000, the percentage of Harpswell's workforce that commuted outside of Town had decreased to 74.5%, but the number of such workers had nevertheless increased to 1,850 people. Also in 2000, the number of workers living and working in Harpswell had increased to 634, or 25.5% of Harpswell's resident workforce. An additional 228 workers in Harpswell commuted to Harpswell from other locations. Coupling these changes with the growing population it becomes clear that there are ever-increasing demands placed upon Harpswell's roads by automobiles, trucks, bicyclists and pedestrians. At the same time, private roads serving multiple subdivisions often are poorly maintained, causing safety concerns in provision of emergency services. In recent years, the Town has adopted and amended a roads ordinance that requires minimum standards for private road construction and maintenance. Even though the Town is not generally asked to accept new subdivision roads and the costs thereof, poor road

construction leads to high maintenance costs for existing and future homeowners who live along them.

Analysis/Issues Of particular concern is the condition of Routes 123, 24, and Cundy's Harbor Road. Parts of these require fundamental reconstruction. Cosmetic, periodic repaving and filling of potholes by the state are inadequate maintenance of these roads. Whether to include paved shoulders and bicycle/pedestrian usage along Routes 123, 24 & Cundy's Harbor Road is being considered by the Highway Safety Committee. A Special Town Meeting in May 2004 approved bonding \$600,000 for a capital roads project to take place over a 1-2 year timeframe for seven Town roads – Aucocisco, Eggemoggin, Field, Pinkham Point, Stevens Corner, South Dyer's and Ocean Street. The Selectmen and the Town's consulting engineer will oversee the work to maintain cost controls and oversight of this major capital improvement project. As development has increased, so have the number of entrances onto the major highways in Harpswell. These entrances increase safety hazards. The Maine DOT, on state-aid highways, and the Site Plan Review Ordinance now regulate access from new commercial uses to help limit any increased traffic hazard.

Goal: Provide a system of transportation which offers all users safe, reliable access throughout Town.

❖ ***Policies***

- The Town will provide experienced oversight to ensure continuity of capital planning, road improvements, snow removal and road maintenance among other functions.
- An annual review process to analyze the condition of the Town roads and projections of cost for upgrades to the roads should be developed. Professional engineering review maybe necessary to develop proper specifications and bid procedures.
- The Town will work with neighboring towns and employers to create regional commuter park and ride lots in conjunction with commuter transportation programs.

❖ ***Action Recommendations***

- The Town will work with State DOT and regional committees to ensure timely and appropriate State highway improvements to Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Rd.
- The Town will refine standards for road size and construction and periodically update roads ordinance to reflect changes deemed useful. One concern is the requirement that roads be a fixed minimum width even for small subdivisions.
- The Town will explore solutions to resolve problems of substandard road construction and maintenance of old subdivision roads.
- Advocate with the State for the reconstruction of Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Road to current roadbed engineering standards to avoid the inefficient use of public monies spent in the past on temporary repaving of these highways.
- Develop a clear policy as to the width, speeds, and addition of paved shoulders along State and Town roads.

- The Town should undertake a study of the merits of a bike path system that links with similar proposals for Brunswick.
- The Town will study needs, value, and possible locations for future bicycle paths. A long-range system could connect large reserves of open space using bike-ways on land privately acquired, as well as on available road rights-of-way. Such efforts should be dovetailed with the proposed Open Space Plan.

Libraries

Background Opportunities for lifelong learning are an important amenity in any community. The two local libraries, in Cundy's Harbor and Orr's Island, are not Town - owned or operated. The Town provides limited funding to these two libraries. The Neck does not have a library. Cundy's Harbor Library is considering an expansion. The Town contributes financially to Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick annually to enable Town residents to have town-subsidized access to a full-service facility.

Trends In the last three years the budget request from the Curtis Memorial Library has risen from \$74,500 in 2002 to \$81,200 in 2003 to \$85,260 in 2004. Even so, the per capita cost for Harpswell residents for having access to this regional facility in Brunswick is currently \$15.50 as compared to \$40.81 per capita for Brunswick residents. Harpswell cardholders are 12.8% of all cardholders and account for 13.3% of all borrowing activity.

Analysis/Issues Curtis is an excellent regional facility that Harpswell must determine how best to support. Harpswell voters confront an annual decision about the cost/benefit of supporting a regional library, which a limited number of residents patronize. Increasingly, regional libraries rely not just on their own collections, but also on the additional services and media more readily available through improved computer linkages and interlibrary loan programs. One issue facing the Town is the degree to which it would encourage local libraries to duplicate and/or access these new services and media.

Goal: Provide comprehensive library reference, research and recreational reading opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities in a cost-effective, efficient manner.

❖ *Policy*

- The Town should continue to actively support both the local and regional library services that are currently available to Harpswell residents.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- Selectmen will seek advice from the local library boards, Library Committee and others to discuss with Curtis Memorial Library what an appropriate ratio of cost is for Harpswell support of Curtis Memorial.

- The Town will consider expanded financial support for its two local libraries to assist in their expansion and use of member interlibrary loan services.

Fiscal Capacity

Background Fiscal capacity refers to the Town's ability, through taxation and fees, to provide an adequate level of community services and facilities. The term, as used in the comprehensive plan, also refers to the Town's ratio of bonded indebtedness to its property valuation as defined by the State. As property values have risen over the past several years, the State has required the Town to revalue its real estate to reflect current market values. The State's concern is twofold: first, to assure that all communities are meeting a constitutional obligation to assess property at fair market value; and second, to base state educational funding assistance to communities on frequently updated valuation data.

Trends In 1992, the Town's outstanding bonding obligation, including its share of Cumberland County debt, was \$1,711,415, or 0.34% of the Town's valuation as defined by the State. Today, the Town's valuation is \$831,970,262. The Town's current bond obligations, excluding any for Cumberland County, total \$2,207,500, which amounts to 0.27% of its valuation. This is well within the recommended limit of 5% of State valuation for bonding, and the legal limit of 15% of valuation.

Analysis/Issues The need to fund capital projects such as new community facilities and infrastructure (roads, plant and equipment) must be balanced by the Town's ability to pay for these projects. The Town has sufficient capacity to fund such projects within recommended limits. However, residents also must determine the level of taxation they are willing to accept. In the near term, the Town is presently undergoing revaluation by a private consultant retained for that purpose. Concurrently, the Maine Legislature and the Governor have pledged to develop major property tax reform in the wake of the November 2004 election's defeat of the Palesky Tax Cap Initiative. Regardless of how these uncertainties are resolved, a planned system of capital expenditures is a prudent and responsible process that allows for potential long-term cost savings. Needed capital improvements can be anticipated and coordinated in a multi-year schedule that spreads the burden over time to minimize the need for borrowing, maximize eligibility for assistance from outside public funding sources, and reduce unpredictable fluctuations in the tax burden.

Goal: **Promote ongoing community discussion of the Long-term Capital Projects Plan contained herein, in order to review and revise projected capital proposals, expenditures, and priorities annually in light of periodic change.**

❖ *Policies*

- As the Town grows, we must monitor the costs of delivering services to Town residents to ensure the maximization of resources and, as necessary, modify the delivery of those services to maintain their cost effectiveness.

❖ *Action Recommendations*

- The Town will initiate an annual Capital Projects Review by meeting with all boards and committees for their capital project recommendations. A Plan will be developed and presented for public discussion and review by the Budget Advisory Committee and Selectmen. This process should begin early enough in the fall to enable adequate review by all involved.
- The Town will consider the fiscal impact of capital projects on the Town's mill rate, its credit rating and its fiscal capacity to fund such projects in its annual review.
- Continue the development of Five- and Ten Year Capital Projects Plans.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

Ten years from now, in 2015, Harpswell residents will look back and answer two questions:

- Have we made prudent choices in managing growth to retain the Town's character?
- Have we fairly balanced the needs of the community with the desires of individual property owners?

The Future Land Use Plan offers a framework to guide the community's land use options in a manner that will allow a strong "YES" to both questions. Fundamental to the Plan, as the preceding chapters state, is a concern that Harpswell's community character and quality of life may be eroded unless managed carefully. Such growth is changing the face and population of other coastal communities in Maine in a way that many believe is detrimental to the environment and residents. The Future Land Use Plan is an effort to preserve the best of Harpswell while accommodating growth responsibly.

Plan Objectives

The Future Land Use Plan designates areas of Town suitable and appropriate for types of general uses. The Plan also designates intensity of use within these areas. These uses are based on extensive research and study of natural and man-made characteristics of the Town. Evaluation of these characteristics has identified problems, opportunities and successful examples of land use.

The Future Land Use Plan is a requirement of the State, which recommends categories of land uses that include "growth" and "rural" areas, as well as "transitional" areas. Harpswell's Future Land Use Plan establishes categories that meet the State's requirements as follows:

- Village Districts
- Settled Villages
- Rural Areas
- Rural Neighborhoods
- Town District
- Waterfront Neighborhoods and Islands

These land use categories achieve State and Town objectives as further described.

Village Districts

These areas recognize traditional historical settlements that have grown over the years to include typical characteristics such as churches, libraries, schools, general stores, post offices, cemeteries, fire departments and community halls. They also include homes near each other on small lots, allowing residents to walk easily from place to place. They have served as core communities for an island town spread far over land and water. This Plan respects the community values and settlement patterns of Harpswell's villages by encouraging expansion around them on adjacent larger tracts of land. Village Districts are designated for Cundy's Harbor, South, West, and East Harpswell, and Harpswell Center. They generally propose a continuation of the traditional mix of uses and intensity of land use found in the existing villages. Preservation of historic structures and homes is encouraged as a means of maintaining community identity and quality of life.

The goal of the Village Districts is to promote pedestrian movement and street life by placing homes, shops, workplaces and public buildings in close proximity; to reduce vehicular traffic; to provide locations for town life such as greens, parks, natural lands and civic buildings; to promote living opportunities for residents of all ages and financial means; and to promote a pattern of development that provides for cost effective public investment for required public services. It is the intent of the Plan to guide most new growth to these areas.

Harpswell Center In the geographic center of Harpswell Neck, Harpswell Center boasts a collection of historic buildings that includes Kellogg Church, the old Town House, a cattle pound, Centennial Hall and several period homes. Several office buildings, a scout hall and the Harpswell Historical Society's building are also located in this cluster. Around this constellation of period structures a number of larger parcels of land are located, which eventually will likely be subdivided. A fine expanded village district may grow here with a mix of types of homes. It does not appear that much commercial development will grow here, but the presence of several small office buildings suggests the possibility of additional mixed office/business uses. This area is some 300 acres in size, with half potentially developable over time.

South and West Harpswell With over 500 acres of developed and undeveloped land, this area consists of fine period homes on Pott's Point, Ash Cove Road and West Harpswell along Route 123. West Harpswell School, a church and several businesses and artisans' galleries are located here. This attractive neighborhood has distant views of the ocean from higher elevations and a number of larger parcels that may be subdivided over time. Though 10 miles down Harpswell Neck from Brunswick, the great beauty of the area suggests it will continue to be developed with new homes. It has the potential for new, small retail shops and businesses to be included. Some 200 acres appear to be developable over time.

East Harpswell Located at the north end of Great Island and only five miles to Cook's Corner, this neighborhood has been actively developed in the past twenty years with a variety of old and new subdivisions. Its substantial population and relatively built-up

nature suggests the possibility of some new business services to complement those along Cundy's Harbor Road. Care should be taken to avoid what appears to be the beginning of a commercial strip in this area, and any new businesses should be clustered in one location. With a church, cemetery and existing businesses, this area may be thought of as a neighborhood waiting to become a village. Careful provision of amenities such as public park space and new commercial activity in a centralized location could offer an attractive village center. There appear to be less than 100 acres of developable land.

Cundy's Harbor A traditional New England fishing village, this neighborhood has grown over the past twenty years to include a number of vacation homes along the waterfront. The village core has a number of period homes of modest architectural style, suggesting the nature of a fishing center. The harbor itself is still home to many lobster boats and several trawlers for groundfishing, and some captains still live in the village.

A recent study of the village, Cundy's Harbor Working Waterfront Study, was commissioned by the town. It focused on concerns that this working waterfront community, among others in Harpswell, may be gradually overcome by new residential development along the waterfront. In addition, various other concerns, such as loss of access to the water, lack of storage and parking space, and high-assessed values of working waterfront properties were covered. The report is referred to elsewhere in this Plan and is available for study at the Town Planner's office. A fine opportunity exists for this village to accommodate likely new growth on some 100 acres of land north of the village center, creating new population support for the local restaurants, general store, library, church, and industrial park. Harpswell's only industrial park might also expand to accommodate operations similar to those existing now.

Settled Villages

In this category are the villages of Orr's Island and Bailey Island, originally fishing communities, and now known as well, for their vacation character. These villages have many of the same fine community features described above but have little land left for expansion. In some locations both islands reveal environmental impacts that jeopardize groundwater and natural resources, suggesting need for caution and care with regard to size and location of new development.

The goal of these districts is to foster the same attributes of village life described previously by maintaining the distinctive character of these island communities without accommodating significant new development. Market pressures in these areas will expand the "tear-down" phenomenon by which older homes are replaced with new, often substantially larger homes. To maintain community character, scale, and quality of groundwater and ocean water, the size and location of such new homes must be managed carefully.

Bailey Island With very little vacant land left for development, Bailey Island is a mature village, which is nearly fully settled or built up. Famous as a vacation tourist destination, the island is perhaps best known for its photogenic Mackerel Cove. This sheltered body

of water is still home to a fleet of lobster and fishing boats. With fewer young men and women entering the fishing industry and pressure on the working waterfront from new residential development, the island faces the same changes that other waterfront communities are experiencing in Maine. Though there is little room for expansion, the island is witnessing the loss of smaller cottages and camps on the waterfront, as new large homes are built in their place. In cases where such homes are planned for non-conforming lots, or in places with documented environmental degradation, the town should manage new growth for location and scale. The island still maintains a village-like pace of activity and neighborhood character, even during peak vacation season.

Orr's Island About twice the size of Bailey Island, Orr's Island is also a mature village with little land left for expansion. Though there are several large parcels that remain undeveloped, they seem best used predominantly as conservation open space in the midst of the substantial resident population, and have been designated as Rural Conservation. The village area from Lowell's Cove to the Cribstone Bridge contains a library, churches, post office, small shops and galleries, all of which provide a sense of village life amidst many period historic homes. The same pressures for new waterfront homes, replacing older, smaller cottages, exist here, as on Bailey Island. Multiple environmental constraints, often resulting from overly dense development and outdated septic systems, also exist on Orr's Island, and should serve to limit number and scale of new homes.

Waterfront Neighborhoods

These areas have grown over the history of Harpswell, initially as fishing districts and more recently as vacation home locations. These neighborhoods are located throughout town in various forms. There are places where camps and cottage colonies, dating to the late 1800s still exist. In other areas, such as Indian Rest on Great Island, summer cottages were developed in speculative subdivisions during the early 1900s on lots as small as a tenth of an acre. Some locations, such as Stover's Cove in South Harpswell have a mixture of seasonal cottages that have been converted to year-round homes and more recently built homes. Neighborhoods such as High Head have been developed as subdivisions with wooded appeal and well-built, larger homes. Many of these neighborhoods have serious problems with groundwater quality. Gun Point and Long Point are two of many locations with salt-water intrusion in wells, whereas the Dyer Cove area on the west side of Quahog Bay has periodically been closed to shellfish harvesting due to nitrogen overloading of the bay from dense development and old septic systems. Nevertheless, these neighborhoods experience demand for conversion of older cottages to new large homes on small, nonconforming lots. The town must use great care to protect existing homes from further groundwater degradation due to new development. Limits to growth in these areas also are necessary to prevent further resource degradation and to encourage resource restoration.

Within waterfront neighborhoods are 'working waterfronts.' These include the core of Cundy's Harbor, Mackerel Cove, Lowell Cove, Lookout Point, Pott's Harbor, Orr's Cove, Dyer Cove, Harpswell Harbor, Ridley Cove and Long Cove. Working waterfronts consist of harbors and coves with anchorage for fishing boats of all kinds, as well as

marinas. These are waterfronts that have relatively protected anchorages and waterfront facilities for parking, fishing gear, bait storage, and space to offload landed catch. Working waterfronts confront a variety of pressures that have been described elsewhere.

Rural Areas

Rural Areas reflect Harpswell's natural landscape of forest, field and water. These features are prized for their contrast to the built environment and for their beauty. For many, they are the essence of Harpswell's rural identity. Where these lands include farms, hayfields, woodlots, lots in tree growth, and large natural habitat blocks, the intent of the Plan is to preserve these features and accommodate only limited new development. Rural Areas are identified on Harpswell Neck in two locations along Route 123, on Orr's Island and on Great Island. On Harpswell Neck these begin at the north end of Harpswell offering an attractive gateway to the town and extend to Harpswell Center, then beyond Harpswell Center to West Harpswell. These establish the character of rural wooded lands that provide a sense of separation between settled areas on Harpswell Neck. Another Rural Area is designated for Great Island along Cundy's Harbor Road, between East Harpswell and Cundy's Harbor. This area also continues a pattern of low-density residential development and maintains a sense of separation between more heavily developed neighborhoods. Very low densities and substantial setbacks from main roads of 75 feet where possible, will guide development away from main roads. Wooded buffer areas between main roads and new homes will maintain rural character.

Within Harpswell's rural landscape are essential natural features such as wetlands, floodplains, steep hillsides, high-yield groundwater wells, large habitat blocks and critical habitat areas. Rural Areas acknowledge the intrinsic value and ecological contribution of these and are designated to protect and preserve these districts and features, accommodating only limited new development. In some cases the combination of these natural features creates distinctive marine-forest ecology such as that around Long Reach on Great Island. On Orr's Island the remaining block of natural landscape is valued for itself as a forested preserve near heavily developed Orr's and Bailey Island neighborhoods. Elsewhere, on Great Island, remaining blocks of forested land at the north head of Quahog Bay and along the eastern edge of Quahog Bay and Bethel Point, are designated Rural Areas. This will prevent further pollution of Quahog Bay from development, and preserve some of the last undeveloped waterfront in Harpswell. As noted earlier, most of the waterfront in town is built-up. Retention of some undeveloped waterfront areas not only reduces impacts on the ocean, but also maintains some of the exquisite natural marine-forest character of the community.

Within this category are most of the offshore islands. With little existing development and little developable land, these islands sometimes harbor rare birds, waterfowl and plants, and should not be intensively developed.

Rural Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods including Doughty Point, parts of East Harpswell and Cundy's Points have experienced extensive residential development over the past twenty years, and have relatively little land left for development. Parts of these areas not designated Rural Areas are expected to be built out at prevailing neighborhood densities.

Town District

Harpswell's far-flung settlement pattern over island, peninsula and water has created difficulty in communication and transportation in the past. Consequently, villages have required multiple services – post offices, churches, schools, libraries, fire stations, and community halls. As the Town grows in coming years, the Plan suggests it build on the wise decision made twenty years ago to locate the Town Offices in the geographic center of Harpswell. Several years ago the Town purchased about 70 acres of forestland abutting about 100 acres already owned around the Town Offices. The Town District recognizes the possibility of new public and private development in a central location, convenient to all residents, as the town grows. New, or expanded public services (town offices, recycling center, post office, recreation center, for instance) and possible new business services (bank branch, convenience foods, professional offices, restaurant, coffee shop, bakery, laundromat, service station, for instance) might be developed along Mountain Road. The Town District will complement Village Districts and Settled Villages by offering services the villages don't have enough population to support. It should serve to unify and bring together remote parts of town.

Land Use Inventory Maps

The Town Planner and the Town's Comprehensive Plan consultant, Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG), have developed with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, six informational maps illustrating a number of land use features. These maps have assisted in preparing the Future Land Use Plan, and have a wide range of information that may be useful to the public, builders, developers, the Planning Board, Codes Office, selectmen, and others. Not all the maps are included in the published Comprehensive Plan, but are on file in the Town Planner's office. A brief description of each of these maps follows:

Existing Land Use Map

This map inventories all land uses in the town and their approximate extent. Major categories include: Agriculture, Commercial, Institutional, Recreation, Residential, Land Cover, and Conservation. Within these categories are sub-categories providing further refinement of information. Parcel lines, buildings and an average assumed residential lot coverage are depicted. The map is revealing in illustrating the extensive amount of undeveloped land.

Remaining Subdividable Parcels Map

These parcels are divided in three categories: 0-1.99 acres; 2-19.99 acres; and 20-200 acres. Protected lands in conservation, resource protection, or owned by government, are also identified. Of note is that 40% of the developable area falls in the 20-200 acre category. Another 53% falls in the 2-19.99 acre category. The two combined represent 10,555 acres, or about two-thirds of the town's total acreage. Though designated "developable", these categories do not take into account the presence of wetlands, steep slopes and other constraints, which reduce their actual buildable area.

Drainage Basin Analysis Map

GPCOG has mapped all drainage basins in town, enabling calculations of precipitation absorption and groundwater consumption by local land uses. The result is the identification of areas that consume more groundwater than is safely replenished. When consumption exceeds 15% of precipitation recharge, it is possible that groundwater quality is reduced due to inadequate dilution of storm water runoff and septic system discharge. These areas have been "red flagged" on the maps, indicating where the town should carefully limit new development. In addition, locations of high and moderate yield wells are noted, as well as areas in town where there exist reductions in groundwater quality, due largely to dense residential development, inadequate septic system quality, or too little separation of septic systems from wells.

Natural Resources Map

The Natural Resources Map includes many wildlife and plant life areas of significance. These have been inventoried by the Maine Department of Natural Resources and include wetlands, ponds, streams, steep slopes, habitat blocks, shellfish areas, shellfish closures, significant bird habitat and nesting areas, eelgrass and rare plants. In some cases these features are protected from development and human activity by town land use regulation, and in other cases by state regulation. Some resources are not protected at all and represent a challenge to the town in balancing their value with future land development.

New Residential Units Map

From 1998-2003 some 345 new homes, seasonal cottages, mobile homes and apartments were constructed, and are mapped by location on this map. Of interest is the fact that these were quite evenly distributed through town, and that a majority were waterfront lots.

Development Constraints Map

This map combines information from the previously described maps to illustrate significant land features and other information to indicate where new development can safely and appropriately occur, and conversely, where not to build. Principal categories of constraints include Moderate Constraints, where some development can occur with careful review by the town; Severe Constraints, where development generally should not occur; and Protected Areas where development can't occur due to protected status or regulation. Note that designated areas around high yield groundwater wells are both a possible water source for new development, as well as areas that require careful management to avoid pollution from development.

Principles of Land Use Management

From analysis and evaluation of the extensive information developed and inventoried on maps, as previously described, principles to guide the town in planning for land use and managing growth over the next ten years follow:

Protect and Preserve Natural Landscape Features These are valuable land characteristics that should be recognized for their contribution as natural resources and features that limit development. If development is allowed to occur on, or near these areas, human safety, the natural environment, and development are compromised. Features include: wetlands and water, floodplains, aquifer recharge areas, steep slopes, wildlife habitat areas.

Preserve the Character of the Waterfront Much new residential development has occurred on waterfront lots over the past twenty years, altering the visual character of the forested waterfront, and causing pollution from storm water runoff and septic systems built too close to the ocean. Development should be limited in areas where the ocean and groundwater are polluted; the majority of new development should be directed inland; and development on lots under the one acre minimum lot size should be managed to reflect the scale of neighboring buildings and to minimize ground and ocean water pollution.

Maintain and Expand Historic Villages Our traditional New England villages were the core of community on Orr's and Bailey Islands, Great Island and Harpswell Neck. The character and form of these, as described previously in Village Districts and Settled Villages, offer models by which Harpswell can continue to accommodate growth in the future. Harpswell can continue to house a diversity of new residents affordably and attractively by preserving historic homes and buildings, providing for single-family homes, attached homes, "cluster" development, and apartments. By allowing expansion on larger parcels of land around villages such as South and West Harpswell, Harpswell Center, East Harpswell and Cundy's Harbor, the town can avoid overcrowding the waterfront and reinforce the sense of community in these traditional communities. Permitting retail and business uses, as well as public facilities, parks and open space will enrich life there.

On Bailey and Orr's Islands there continues to be vital village life. There is limited land for new development on either island, so the challenge for the town will be to manage change of the built environment in a way to minimize loss of the historic architecture and settlement patterns of these communities.

Retain Distinctive Rural Features That Define Community Character Much of Harpswell's rural identity stems from the forest and fields that separate its village from each other. To preserve this special character, development should be limited outside of the villages to lower residential densities than in the villages. New homes along major roads, including Routes 123 and 24, Mountain Road and Cundy's Harbor Road, should be set back at least 75' beyond a wooded buffer where lot depths permit. An important

part of the rural landscape is the view from the road. Many scenic vistas are identified on the maps described previously. These should be inventoried further and researched to determine how they can be permanently preserved.

Limit Growth in Areas With Identified Environmental Problems A number of neighborhoods and places have experienced environmental degradation due to overcrowding of homes, poor water quality, salt-water intrusion, overboard discharges, hazardous waste contamination, and well contamination from winter road salt usage. Special care is needed to assist existing homeowners and limit new home development in these areas until environmental deficits are overcome.

Cluster New Commercial Development New business development should be encouraged to locate in population centers, such as the expanding villages. Land use regulations to complement Site Plan Review regulations will be developed for businesses to guide commercial development from spreading along major roads with multiple curb cuts. Rather, incentives can be created to enable business to co-locate with others in small, landscaped centers. Set back from main roads and buffered from nearby homes with landscaping, these small business centers can offer needed goods, services and employment to village residents.

Land Use Management Strategies

An assortment of tested and productive management strategies exists to guide community development. Harpswell has used some of these for some time, including Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, a Basic Land Use Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, Road Ordinance, and Site Plan Review regulations for businesses. The Comprehensive Plan recommends changes to some of these, and new regulations to complement those existing.

Density and Lot Size

A key recommendation of the Plan is to guide most new development toward Village Districts, while directing new development away from Rural Areas and Waterfront Neighborhoods. One way to accommodate this development goal is by encouraging higher density development around existing villages and lower density development in rural and waterfront areas. Density of development simply means the number of dwelling units per number of acres of parcel size. Traditional residential development patterns in our villages have resulted in a range of densities from one dwelling per acre to four dwellings per acre. These densities account for the compact, walkable, interesting character of villages. Current land use regulations result in approximate densities of one dwelling unit per acre. The town's current subdivision regulations permit a density of two dwellings per acre in cluster developments. The Plan encourages new development at densities up to those existing in villages now, subject to environmental constraints and planning board site plan layout review.

Current densities in rural areas range from one dwelling per four acres to one dwelling per twenty acres, or more. Densities of one dwelling per twenty or more acres define the wooded character of these areas. It is possible, however, to accommodate a new subdivision of homes clustered on half acre lots within a large parcel of land, suitably set back from main roads, leaving most of the land in open space. The result would be an overall low, rural density of development. Small lots do not necessarily mean higher density. So, in rural areas it is possible to accommodate a modest amount of the town's overall projected growth in several ways:

- In subdivisions with minimum lot sizes of half an acre but a great majority of the subdivision land in open space
- in subdivisions with maximum lot sizes of perhaps an acre or an acre and a half with the great majority of the land in open space
- in subdivisions with a maximum density over the entire subdivision of perhaps one dwelling per ten acres, or more, of land

In addition, the Plan recommends use of public incentives to accomplish desired land use goals. These are described below.

Subdivision Regulations

Much of remaining developable land consists of larger parcels some 10 – 200 acres in size. It is likely that as these parcels are sold for development, they will require subdivision review. Current subdivision regulations should be modified to enable more flexible application and regulation. The goal is to allow housing types that can be “clustered,” and to permit apartments, duplex homes and attached homes. Cluster subdivisions include some usable open space, shorter roads and utility lines, and consume less land for housing. Though the current subdivision regulations permit cluster, or open space developments, none have been proposed since the ordinance was approved by voters two years ago. Following are worthwhile modifications:

- Require all major subdivisions (more than five lots) to provide some cluster housing.
- Require some percentage of land in all subdivisions to be dedicated open space.
- Plan proposed open space in subdivisions to preserve desirable natural features and coincide with town-wide open space needs as identified on a town-wide open space plan.
- Plan for lower overall residential densities in subdivisions within Rural Areas, and higher overall densities of development in Village Districts to encourage new growth to locate inland, away from the waterfront, and generally outside of rural areas.
- Permit the use of dedicated open space for location of advanced community wastewater systems and community wells.
- Research possible use of dedicated open space for location of individual residential wastewater systems and wells, subject to standard state soils, construction, and setback requirements.
- Moderately reduce the amount of required open space in the current cluster subdivision regulations to make this development alternative more viable.

- Permit mixed residential and business uses within Village Districts.
- Discourage “phasing” of subdivisions, done to avoid meeting requirements of major subdivisions.
- Develop “planned development” regulations to provide more flexibility in the design and planning of developments containing a mix of housing types and mixed residential/commercial uses, that don’t fit the typical definition of a subdivision.
- To encourage affordable housing in new subdivisions, provide flexibility for planning board to reasonably alter some regulations such as road frontage, density, and open space.
- Require preliminary meetings with Town Planner and Planning Board prior to subdivision application to communicate town land use objectives for development proposals.
- Develop standards that minimize road length in new subdivisions to reduce impervious cover, stormwater runoff, disturbance of habitat, and response time for emergency vehicles.
- Accommodate a maximum of five lots and dwellings in any one subdivision in any one year in Rural Areas.
- To preserve remaining undeveloped waterfrontage, require a common shared waterfront of at least two hundred feet and docking facilities for some portion of new subdivisions.
- Develop a density standard of one dwelling for every 300 feet of shore frontage, while accommodating lots with 150 feet of frontage, to preserve some open space along waterfronts in new subdivisions.
- Develop standards for landscaping materials, sizes, and types.

Site Plan Review Ordinance

This ordinance provides for Planning Board review of business and commercial development. Following are proposed modifications:

- Develop standards for review of location and size of area required for various business uses in order to prevent conflicts with adjacent residential uses and traffic hazards.
- Develop standards for types and sizes of landscape plant materials and other landscape architectural screens where buffering is necessary between adjacent properties.
- Develop buffer setback standards to assure adjacent properties of appropriate distance from various types of business uses.

Performance Standards

These are minimum measurable standards that can be applied to certain land uses that should be managed within the various districts of the town. An example would be minimum bacteria and mineral concentrations that the state allows in drinking water.

- Create performance standards for new residential groundwater wells proposed for districts that have been identified as potentially contaminated on the Water Resources Map of this Plan.

- Create standards that manage the number of new homes that can be developed in potentially contaminated areas until contamination is reduced to acceptable levels in Waterfront Neighborhoods and other areas.
- Create standards for the amount of discharge of water used in business or manufacturing operations, laundromats, and the like.
- Create a local plumbing code to permit more careful regulation of location, size and setback requirements for sanitary wastewater disposal systems on non-conforming waterfront lots and other environmentally sensitive areas identified on the Water Resources and Development Constraints maps of this Plan.

Shoreland Zoning and Basic Land Use Ordinances

Modify tables of permitted uses to restrict land uses incompatible with the growing residential character of the community. Examples include firing ranges, ATV trails and racetracks, and dirtbike trails.

- Develop regulations to limit maximum speeds and sound of high-speed personal watercraft within Harpswell waters.
- Develop regulations for waterfront neighborhoods with non-conforming lots and documented environmental deficits (over-consumption of groundwater, polluted groundwater, hazardous waste spills, for example), as identified on the Development Constraints Map and others of this Plan.
- Incorporate recommendations for ‘working waterfronts’ made in this plan and in the Cundy’s Harbor Working Waterfront Study for zoning modifications to preserve these areas.

Public Incentives

To encourage development to locate where designated in this Plan, the town will provide incentives as follows:

- Seek grant funds from state and federal agencies for assistance in developing local public water supplies for existing and new neighborhoods. These water supplies may be created by local non-profit water companies, or simply take the form of community wells in new planned developments.
- Seek grant funds for community advanced wastewater disposal systems
- Invest local funds in new public water supplies and advanced wastewater disposal systems through a revolving loan fund that would be repaid over time by user fees.
- Locate new, or expanded, public facilities in Village Districts over time as population and demand grow, while discouraging their location in Rural Areas.
- Seek grants for and invest in acquisition and development of public open space and parks, as proposed in a town-wide open space plan, that enhance new residential development, and preserve rural areas.
- Accept new public roads only in village areas.

- Promote enrollment in current use taxation programs (Tree Growth, Open Space and Farmland) in Rural Areas.
- Create a town-wide open space plan based around open space and natural resources and their interconnection. This would help reinforce the rural character of rural areas.
- Develop protection mechanisms, funding sources and priorities for implementation of the open space plan.
- Develop a capital investment program with periodic funding into a sinking fund to be used for purchase of critical open space as identified by the open space plan.

Application of the Future Land Use Plan

This section describes the legal intent and content of the Future Land Use Plan. The Future Land Use Plan (FLUP) is required of Comprehensive Plans and updates by state law. The FLUP designates districts by land use and general intensity of use, that is, density of development in terms of number of homes per number of acres, and size of commercial development. Designation of growth and rural areas is required and may be described with various terms.

Implementation of the Future Land Use Plan and its proposed districts requires adoption of the implementation strategies described above and creation of zoning regulations that are guided by the FLUP and the Future Land Use map, and the uses and intensities of land use prescribed therein.

In an effort to promote and publicize the Future Land Use Plan, the town will take the following actions:

- The Future Land Use Plan will be posted prominently in the Town Offices for public study. It will also be posted on the town website along with the entire 2005 Comprehensive Plan Update.
- The Plan will be described in abbreviated form in mailings to all town residents.
- The Future Land Use Plan will be given to all applicants for subdivisions and business site plan review by the planning board.
- The Plan will be distributed to real estate agents doing business in Harpswell.

Place holder for FLUP map

Place Holder for Constraints Map

Place holder for Existing Land Use

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In the preceding chapters this Comprehensive Plan has set forth numerous action recommendations designed to shape the future of Harpswell in such a way as to balance the anticipated growth with the cultural and natural values of the Town. The Implementation Plan is a timeline devised to guide the Town toward the future it has envisioned. The Selectmen shall have final responsibility for delegating the action recommendation tasks to appropriate committees and/or staff persons.

An oversight committee will be established by the Selectmen with the primary responsibility for reviewing the progress of the Plan's implementation. The oversight committee will prepare an annual evaluation of the progress of the Plan's implementation to be included in the Annual Town Report. The oversight committee may also provide assistance to the Selectmen in identifying groups that will be responsible for implementing the various phases of the Plan.

The Town should recognize that those responsible for implementing the Comprehensive Plan will need financial assistance for certain actions, such as new studies, and should appropriate funds accordingly.

The following is the implementation timeline for the action recommendations found in the Marine Environment, Groundwater, Natural Habitat, Housing, Community Character, Marine Economy, Public Services, and the Future Land Use Plan chapters.

Marine Environment

Ongoing

- Continue to participate in the New Meadows River Watershed Project and the Friends of Casco Bay. Explore possibilities for new regional efforts to monitor and improve the quality of the marine environment.
- Continue Town's grant program to eliminate overboard discharges.
- Maintain strong code enforcement efforts to protect the marine environment.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Further restrict the use of herbicides, fertilizers, and toxins near the shoreline to reduce their harmful effects on Harpswell's waters. As a general guideline, a 100-foot setback is recommended (the same distance the State requires for septic systems).
- Explore new septic system technologies which may reduce nitrogen nutrient loading of the marine environment.
- Support efforts to improve utilization of pump-out stations and trash disposal facilities.
- Commit resources to develop educational materials on the value to Harpswell of a high quality marine environment for use in schools and distribution to residents.

- Develop and distribute educational materials to encourage homeowner's to adopt best management practices for minimizing pollution from run-off by maintaining good vegetative buffers along the shore and streams draining to the shore.

Groundwater Resources

Ongoing

- Continue to rigorously enforce the requirements of Maine's Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Rules, especially with respect to conversion of seasonal dwelling units.
- Seek ways to accelerate the elimination of overboard discharge systems.
- Continue to educate and advertise conservation practices that residents can employ for the preservation of groundwater (such as the rain barrel program).

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Identify the Town's high yield aquifers and recharge areas, including wetlands and subsurface recharge areas, and explore feasible solutions for their protection.
- Undertake a study of groundwater, aquifers, and soil conditions to serve as a future basis for identifying areas of the Town that can support higher densities of development.
- Watersheds of particular importance, or which drain into flats, should be identified. Contamination and potential for contamination should be investigated. If areas of concern are identified, the Town should develop strategies to protect the water quality in these streams.
- Review Town ordinances regarding the use of common water and/or sewer systems and develop better incentives to encourage their use in problem areas and developments that propose cluster or open space development.
- Identify areas of groundwater contamination and work with owners of the contaminated properties to facilitate clean-up efforts.
- Review Town ordinances to ensure that the regulations are adequate to reduce the impact of existing and proposed development on the groundwater supply. (Land Use)

Long Term (4+ years)

- Identify existing "shared" water supplies in the community. Encourage the owners of these supplies to have their water tested for contamination. If contaminated, the Town should work with the owners to facilitate elimination of contamination and develop options for preventing future contamination, including the development of mini-wellhead protection programs.
- Establish a Town plumbing code that takes into account Harpswell's unique geology and geography. (Land Use)

Natural Habitat

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Identify and map critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats and travel corridors.
- Create and adopt a Town Open Space Plan.
- Develop ways for critical natural areas and essential wildlife habitats to be preserved while allowing the landowner beneficial use of his or her property.

- Revise land use ordinances to protect the functions and values of the town's larger wetlands and its streams that drain into the ocean.
- Develop and implement a plan for protecting critical upland habitat, wildlife travel corridors and vernal pools. Explore the use of conservation easements, land acquisition, transfer of development rights and managing the location of new roads to help accomplish this.

Housing

Ongoing

- Ensure that local development regulations do not result in unnecessary development costs, particularly for the development of modestly priced, single -family housing.
- Identify programs, mechanisms, and approaches to develop affordable housing.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Modify Town ordinances to provide incentives for building affordable housing.
- A Housing Committee should be established to determine demand and need for various housing types and to assist and promote affordable housing.
- To provide greater housing opportunities, the Town should sponsor educational sessions on credit, home ownership, and other issues related to housing.
- Create a work plan and timetable for new affordable housing over the next five years.
- Create or connect with public/private partnerships interested in affordable housing issues.
- Provide support and referrals to programs such as meals-on-wheels, health care, transportation and personal services to elderly people to assure that they can remain in their homes as long as possible.
- Investigate funding and possible sponsors for affordable housing development from various sources (federal, state, private, and non-profit).
- Develop a variety of housing densities and open space requirements for subdivisions to encourage a greater range of housing types in Town. (Land Use)
- For the purpose of allowing multi-family housing development, the Town will revise land use ordinances to authorize the Planning Board to reduce minimum lot sizes so long as necessary standards are met to protect public health and safety. (Land Use)

Long Term (4+ years)

- Encourage a small, subsidized housing development to meet the Town's affordable housing needs.
- Require major subdivisions to provide affordable housing or contribute toward affordable housing elsewhere in Town.

Community Character

Ongoing

- Continue and possibly expand town financial support for our volunteer emergency services.
- Undertake a program to identify and replace failed septic systems in villages.

- Identify and inventory historic structures in town and work with owners to protect their historic character.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Amend land use ordinances to increase density of development in villages and decrease density of development in rural areas. Maintain present density in rural and waterfront neighborhoods.
- Amend land use ordinances to direct new commercial and institutional development to villages and the town center.
- Amend land use ordinances to maintain rural views from main roads and minimize new curb cuts.
- Amend land use ordinances to clarify essential working waterfronts and limit non-maritime uses in them.
- Amend land use ordinances to designate areas for expansion of marine economic activity.
- Amend land use ordinances to protect further the marine environment from pollution and other adverse impacts of development.
- Amend land use ordinances to protect essential wildlife habitat from the adverse effects of development.
- Upon development of a Town Open Space Plan, work to preserve and connect open spaces. Amend land use ordinances to support preservation and connection of open spaces.
- Identify critical scenic water vistas and adopt measures to preserve their contribution to our community character.
- Develop materials to educate and inform owners of large undeveloped lots of their options for preservation and conservation under state law and through land trusts.
- Encourage cooperative use of recreational wharves to minimize altering the natural appearance of our shoreline.
- In addition to increasing allowable density of development in village areas, continue to allow mobile and manufactured homes anywhere in town. Amend land use ordinances to encourage multifamily housing in village areas where septic treatment methods can protect groundwater quality and groundwater supplies are sufficient. Explore creation of a public program to provide for affordable housing.
- Develop a local plumbing code designed to reflect Harpswell's soil conditions and sewage treatment needs, take into account new septic technologies, and protect our groundwater quality.
- Conduct studies to determine available groundwater supply capacity in village areas.
- Undertake a program to acquire and develop new points of public water access.
- Identify and inventory points of traditional access to water by the public over private land. Work with landowners to perpetuate that access.

Long Term (4+ years)

- Survey the Town-owned land in the Town Center to determine its development restraints and develop a plan for its future use.

Marine Economy

Ongoing

- Hold public forums to identify and establish working waterfronts in Harpswell.
- Continue to provide funding for effective shellfish conservation and enforcement.
- Develop harbor management plans for crowded mooring areas.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Adopt zoning and land use measures to protect working waterfronts from the pressure to convert them to residential use. Review the current Shoreland Zoning boundaries for the Commercial Fishing Districts to protect areas in Town that are critical to commercial fishing. Consider having more restrictive land uses in Commercial Fishing Zones. Consider other land use ordinance changes to encourage boat building and economic activity related to recreational boating
- Resolve title issues of public access points and develop adequate parking and maneuvering space at them.
- Publicize the importance of marine related activities to Harpswell' s local economy and potential threats to the vitality of the industry.
- Create an informational database to monitor the health and well being of commercial fishing and tourism in Town.

Public Services

Town Governance

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- A Governance Committee will study the capacity of town services and explore possible regional and state resources to ensure that the needs of residents are met. This would include, but not be limited to, services such as Town administration, recreation, police, fire & rescue, education and waste disposal.
- Form a volunteer advisory group of residents to conduct a comprehensive inventory of quality of life concerns of the senior population. Identify basic needs of food, shelter, and health; determine deficits and identify means to solve problems (including regional efforts and grant monies). Additional concerns about transportation and recreation should be addressed.

Codes Enforcement Office

Ongoing

- The Codes Office should develop a systematic approach for ensuring that decisions by the Planning Board and Board of Appeals are complied with.
- Maintain a sufficient number of qualified Codes Enforcement Officers to handle the workload.
- Monitor all development and construction to assure that it is carried out in accordance with the applicable codes, regulations, and requirements of the project approval.
- Provide ongoing oversight of sewage disposal systems that are malfunctioning or illegal to assure that violations are addressed, and the resulting systems are functioning according to design, permit requirements, and local codes.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Institute a public information program on septic system maintenance to assure that the public understands how these systems work and what actions are necessary to ensure their long-term operation.
- On a monthly basis the Codes Office will publish all building permits and certificates of completion at the Town Office and on the Town website.

Waste Disposal

Ongoing

- Study the methods used by other towns to achieve higher rates of recycling.
- Continue and expand the Town's recycling program.
- Provide periodic opportunities for disposal of items not currently accepted at the recycling center, including but not limited to automobiles and household hazardous materials.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Budget annually for public outreach programs to educate the Town's residents about the value of recycling.
- Recycling Committee and others will publish informational guides that explain the costs associated with waste disposal and the potential savings associated with waste-reduction and increased recycling. Particular emphasis will be placed on the environmental and personal benefits of reducing purchases of non-recyclable goods.
- Recycling Committee and others will consider methods for monitoring the improper disposal of waste that should be recycled.
- Research the merits of creating a Town composting program.

Schools

Ongoing

- Work with the Town's legislative representatives to alter regional funding formulas to treat towns like Harpswell more fairly.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- To ensure the continued viability of Harpswell schools, develop affordable housing to attract families with children to live in Harpswell.
- Study ways to maintain the viability of local schools.

Long Term (4+ years)

- Selectmen and S.A.D. 75 will develop incentives such as seminars, workshops and conferences to attract citizens to assume a more active role in educational policy.

Public Access

Ongoing

- Develop a plan to improve the condition and function of existing access points.
- Inventory and map types of existing public access including landings, docks, beaches, scenic waterfront areas, islands, and waterways.

- Identify access points most threatened by development and prioritize them for protection.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Determine where new access points are needed and develop a plan to establish them.

Recreation

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Evaluate the need for further professional staffing for this rapidly growing department.
- Determine how long existing indoor town spaces can accommodate recreation activities, and examine the feasibility of constructing a centrally located recreation building.
- Evaluate outdoor spaces throughout the town for future recreational uses, including walking routes, outdoor ice skating rinks, ball fields, and playgrounds.

Mitchell Field

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- The portion of the Field, south of the paved roadway that is wooded and largely undisturbed should be set aside for conservation and low impact recreation.
- Designate and develop the level area near the gate for active recreation, including the construction of playing fields to expand the recreational opportunities available to Harpswellians.
- Reserve the remainder of the field in its present condition pending exploration of potential future uses.
- Conduct a study to determine the costs and benefits of renovating or demolishing the pier or pursuing other alternatives.
- Develop a plan for use of the two dwellings and their land when they are finally given over to the Town. Among the possibilities are sale to provide funds to develop the rest of the field, rental to provide income for the operation of the field, and low income housing.
- Determine whether to remove or continue to use the water tower

Police Services

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Determine with the County how best to continue policing as the Town grows. Affordable housing may encourage deputies to live locally to enhance this service. This form of policing is a good example of provision of local services by a regional government.
- Expand the data obtained from the Sheriff's Department to include information on items such as response times to calls, investigations conducted and closure rates.

Fire and Rescue

Ongoing

- Monitor the provision of these services as the Town grows, to ensure adequate coverage in the future.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Consider strategies to attract citizens to volunteer for emergency services. This would be less costly in the long run than creating a central paid emergency service.

Transportation System

Ongoing

- Advocate with the State for the reconstruction of Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Road to current roadbed engineering standards to avoid the inefficient use of public monies spent in the past on temporary repaving of these highways.
- The Town will work with State DOT and regional committees to ensure timely and appropriate State highway improvements to Routes 123, 24 and Cundy's Harbor Road.
- The Town will refine standards for road size and construction and periodically update the roads ordinance to reflect changes deemed useful. One concern is the requirement that roads be a fixed minimum width even for small subdivisions.
- The Town should undertake a study of the merits of a bike path system that links with similar proposals for Brunswick.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- Develop a clear policy as to the width, speeds, and addition of paved shoulders along State and Town roads.

Long Term (4+ years)

- The Town will explore solutions to resolve problems of substandard road construction and maintenance of old subdivision roads.
- The Town will study needs, value, and possible locations for future bicycle paths. A long-range system could connect large reserves of open space using bike-ways on land privately acquired, as well as on available road rights-of-way. Such efforts should be dovetailed with the proposed Open Space Plan.

Libraries

Ongoing

- Selectmen will seek advice from the local library boards, Library Committee and others to discuss with Curtis Memorial Library what an appropriate ratio of cost is for Harpswell support of Curtis Memorial.

Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- The Town will consider expanded financial support for its two local libraries to assist in their expansion and use of member interlibrary loan services.

Fiscal Capacity

Ongoing

- The Town will initiate an annual Capital Projects Review by meeting with all boards and committees for their capital project recommendations. A Plan will be developed and presented for public discussion and review by the Budget Advisory Committee

and Selectmen. This process should begin early enough in the fall to enable adequate review by all involved.

- The Town will consider the fiscal impact of capital projects on the Town's mill rate, its credit rating and its fiscal capacity to fund such projects in its annual review.
- Continue the development of Five- and Ten-Year Capital Projects Plans.

Future Land Use Plan

Ongoing

- Permit mixed residential and business uses within Village Districts.
- Require preliminary meetings with Town Planner and Planning Board prior to subdivision application to communicate town land use objectives for development proposals.
- Develop standards for review of location and size of area required for various business uses in order to prevent conflicts with adjacent residential uses and traffic hazards.
- Develop standards for types and sizes of landscape plant materials and other landscape architectural screens where buffering is necessary between adjacent properties.
- Develop buffer setback standards to assure adjacent properties of appropriate distance from various types of business uses.
- Develop regulations for waterfront neighborhoods with non-conforming lots and documented environmental deficits (over-consumption of groundwater, polluted groundwater, hazardous waste spills, for example), as identified on the Development Constraints Map and others of this Plan.
- Promote enrollment in current use taxation programs (Tree Growth, Open Space and Farmland) in Rural Areas.

Short Term (1-2years)

- Require all major subdivisions (more than five lots) to provide some cluster housing.
- Require some percentage of land in all subdivisions to be dedicated open space.
- Plan proposed open space in subdivisions to preserve desirable natural features and coincide with town-wide open space needs as identified on a town-wide open space plan.
- Plan for lower overall residential densities in subdivisions within Rural Areas, and higher overall densities of development in Village Districts to encourage new growth to locate inland, away from the waterfront, and generally outside of rural areas.
- Permit the use of dedicated open space for the location of advanced community wastewater systems and community wells.
- Research possible use of dedicated open space for location of individual residential wastewater systems and wells, subject to standard state soils, construction, and setback requirements.
- Moderately reduce the amount of required open space in the current cluster subdivision regulations to make this development alternative more viable.

- To encourage affordable housing in new subdivisions, provide flexibility for planning board to reasonably alter some regulations such as road frontage, density, and open space.
- Develop standards that minimize road length in new subdivisions to reduce impervious cover, stormwater runoff, disturbance of habitat, and response time for emergency vehicles.
- Accommodate a maximum of five lots and dwellings in any one subdivision in any one year in Rural Areas.
- To preserve remaining undeveloped water frontage, require a common shared waterfront of at least two hundred feet and docking facilities for some portion of new subdivisions.
- Develop a density standard of one dwelling for every 300 feet of shore frontage, while accommodating lots with 150 feet of frontage, to preserve some open space along waterfronts in new subdivisions.
- Incorporate recommendations for “working waterfronts” made in this plan and in the Cundy’s Harbor Working Waterfront Study for zoning modifications to preserve these areas.
- Seek grants for and invest in acquisition and development of public open space and parks, as proposed in a town-wide open space plan, that enhance new residential development, and preserve rural areas.
- Create a town-wide open space plan based around open space and natural resources and their interconnection. This would help reinforce the rural character of rural areas.
- Develop protection mechanisms, funding sources and priorities for implementation of the open space plan.
- Develop a capital investment program with periodic funding into a sinking fund to be used for purchase of critical open space as identified by the open space plan.

Mid Term (3-6 years)

- Discourage “phasing” of subdivisions, done to avoid meeting requirements of major subdivisions.
- Develop “planned development” regulations to provide more flexibility in the design and planning of developments containing a mix of housing types and mixed residential/commercial uses, that don’t fit the typical definition of a subdivision.
- Develop standards for landscaping materials, sizes, and types.
- Create performance standards for new residential groundwater wells proposed for districts that have been identified as potentially contaminated on the Water Resources Map of this Plan.
- Create standards that manage the number of new homes that can be developed in potentially contaminated areas until contamination is reduced to acceptable levels in Waterfront Neighborhoods and other areas.
- Create standards for the amount of discharge of water used in business or manufacturing operations, laundromats, and the like.
- Create a local plumbing code to permit more careful regulation of location, size and setback requirements for sanitary wastewater disposal systems on non-conforming

waterfront lots and other environmentally sensitive areas identified on the Water Resources and Development Constraints maps of this Plan.

- Develop regulations to limit maximum speeds and sound of high-speed personal watercraft within Harpswell waters.
- Seek grant funds from state and federal agencies for assistance in developing local public water supplies for existing and new neighborhoods. These water supplies may be created by local non-profit water companies, or simply take the form of community wells in new planned developments.
- Seek grant funds for community advanced wastewater disposal systems

Long Term (7+ years)

- Invest local funds in new public water supplies and advanced wastewater disposal systems through a revolving loan fund that would be repaid over time by user fees.
- Locate new or expanded public facilities in Village Districts over time as population and demand grow, while discouraging their location in Rural Areas.

Harpswell Capital Investment Plan, 2005-2015

Departments	Items	Estimated Costs	When	Town Costs	Other Funding
Sheriff's Deputies, Marine Patrol	Squad Car Replacements	\$25,000	Each Year	\$25,000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Grants, Sinking Fund
	Subtotal	\$25,000		\$250,000	
Cundy's Harbor Fire Department	Tank Truck Replacement	\$200,000	2010-2012	\$20,000 - \$25000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Private Contributions, Grants (in addition to Town Contribution)
	Ambulance	\$120,000	2011		
	New Station Roof	\$8,000 - \$10,000	2005		
	New Station Furnace	\$10,000	2005		
	Subtotal	\$338,000 - \$340,000		\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$88,000 - \$140,000
Orr's & Bailey Islands Fire Dept.	Tank 1 Replacement	\$180,000	2013	\$20,000 - \$25000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Private Contributions, Grants (in addition to Town Contribution)
	Mini Pumper	\$50,000 - \$80,000	2006		
	Engine 1, Paint Refurbishment	\$10,000	2005		
	Ambulance	\$150,000	2008		
	AED Defibrillators	\$6,000	2006		
	Storage Building	\$75,000	2007		
	O.I. Station Roof Replacement	\$20,000	2005		
	O.I. Station Heating Sys. Replacemnt	\$5,000	2009		
	Outside B.I. Station Maintenance	\$9,000	2009		
	Subtotal	\$505,000 - \$535,000		\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$255,000 - \$335,000
Harpswell Neck Fire Dept.	Station Fire/Freeze Alarms	\$8,000	2005	\$20,000 - \$25000/yr. Annual Appropriation	Private Contributions, Grants (in addition to Town Contribution)
	Class A Engine 1, Re-chassis	\$120,000	2008-2009		
	Class A Engine 4, Re-chassis	\$50,000	2008-2009		
	Ambulance	\$120,000-\$150,000	2015		
	Subtotal	\$298,000 - \$328,000		\$200,000 - \$250,000	\$48,000 - \$128,000
Recycling Center	Backhoe	\$80,000	2010	\$80,000	Grants, Sinking Fund, Annual Appropriations
	Forklift	\$20,000	2010	\$20,000	
	Skid Steer	\$20,000	2010	\$20,000	
	Other capital items	\$180,000	2010	\$180,000	
	Subtotal			\$300,000	
Roads	Road paving and reconstruction	\$5-7 million	2005-2013	\$5-7 million Sinking Fund, Annual Appropriations, Bonding	
	Subtotal	\$5,000,000 - \$7,000,000		\$5,000,000 - \$7,000,000	
Totals		\$6,166,000 - \$8,228,000	2005 - 2015	\$5,850,000 - \$8,000,000	\$391,000 - \$603,000